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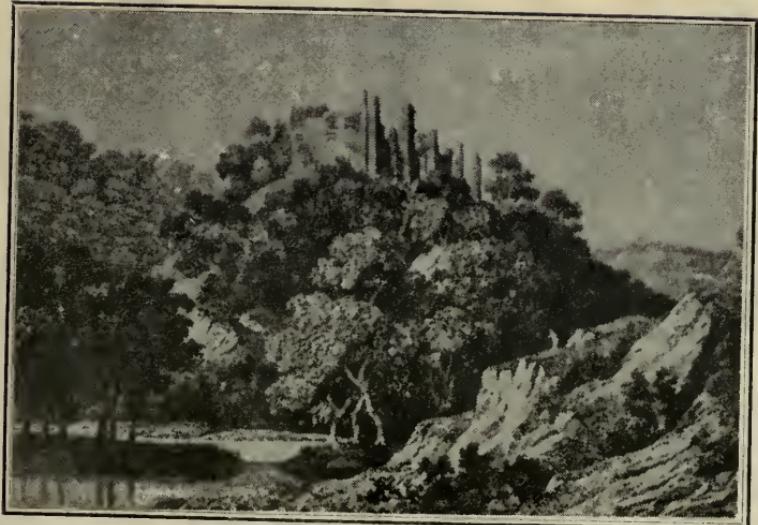


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BERRY POMEROY CASTLE, DEVON

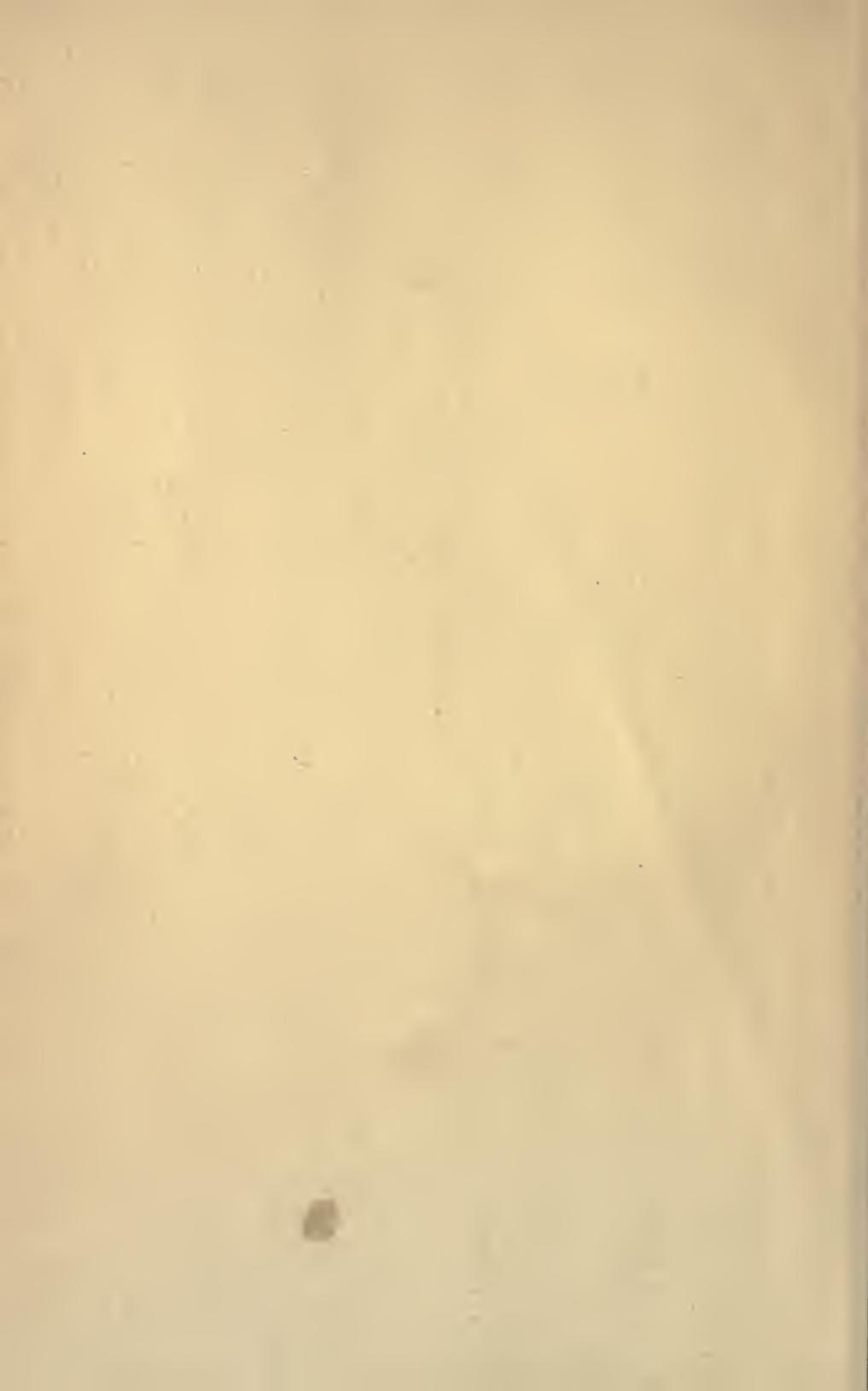
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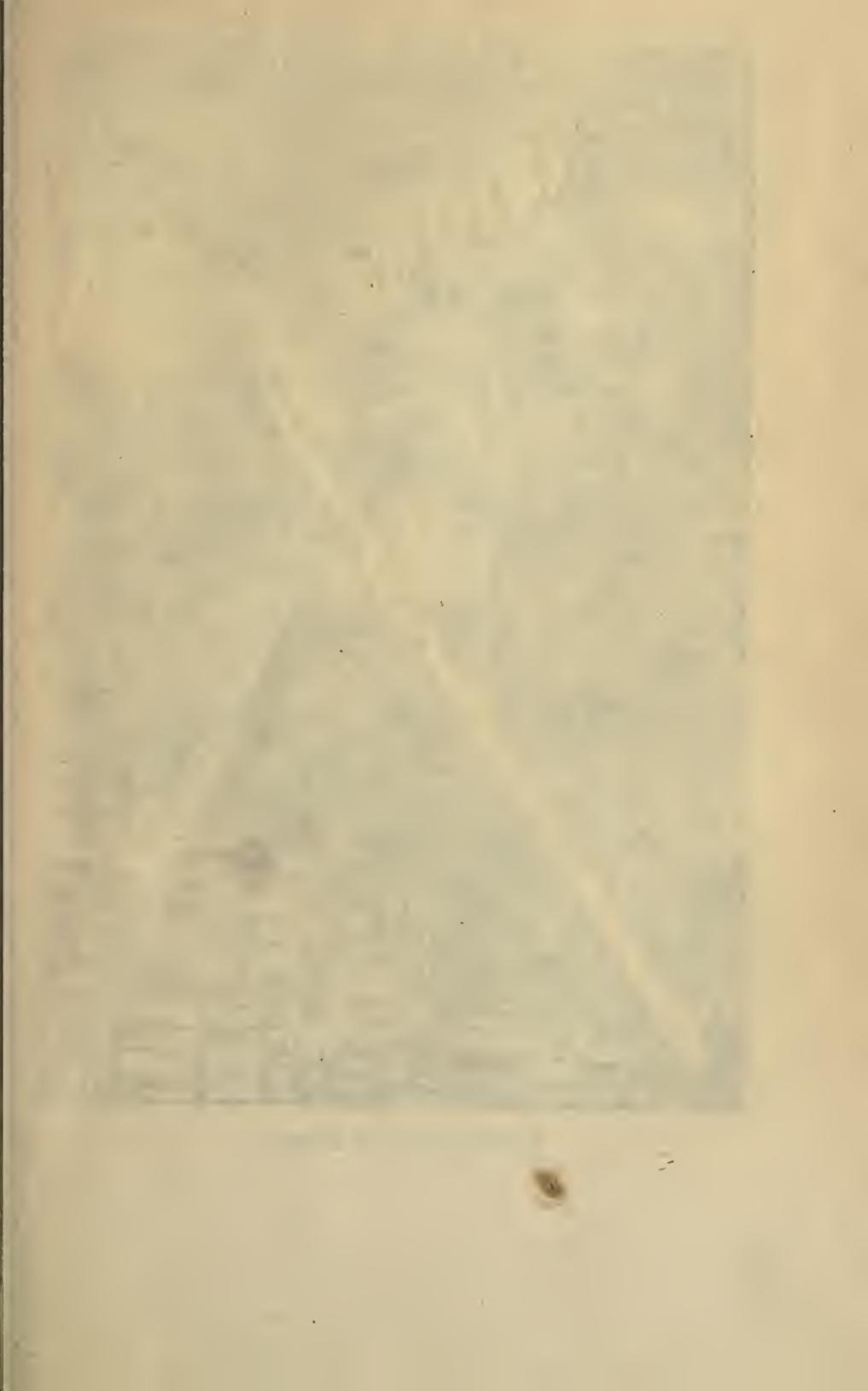


To  
Elsie  
from  
Vivian.

Christmas 1922.

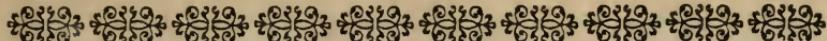








*Christopher says Goodbye.*



# *The LEGENDS of LUMB LANE*

*by*

VIVIAN T. POMEROY

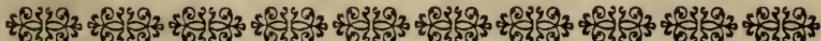
*Illustrated by MARJORY HART*



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## DEDICATION

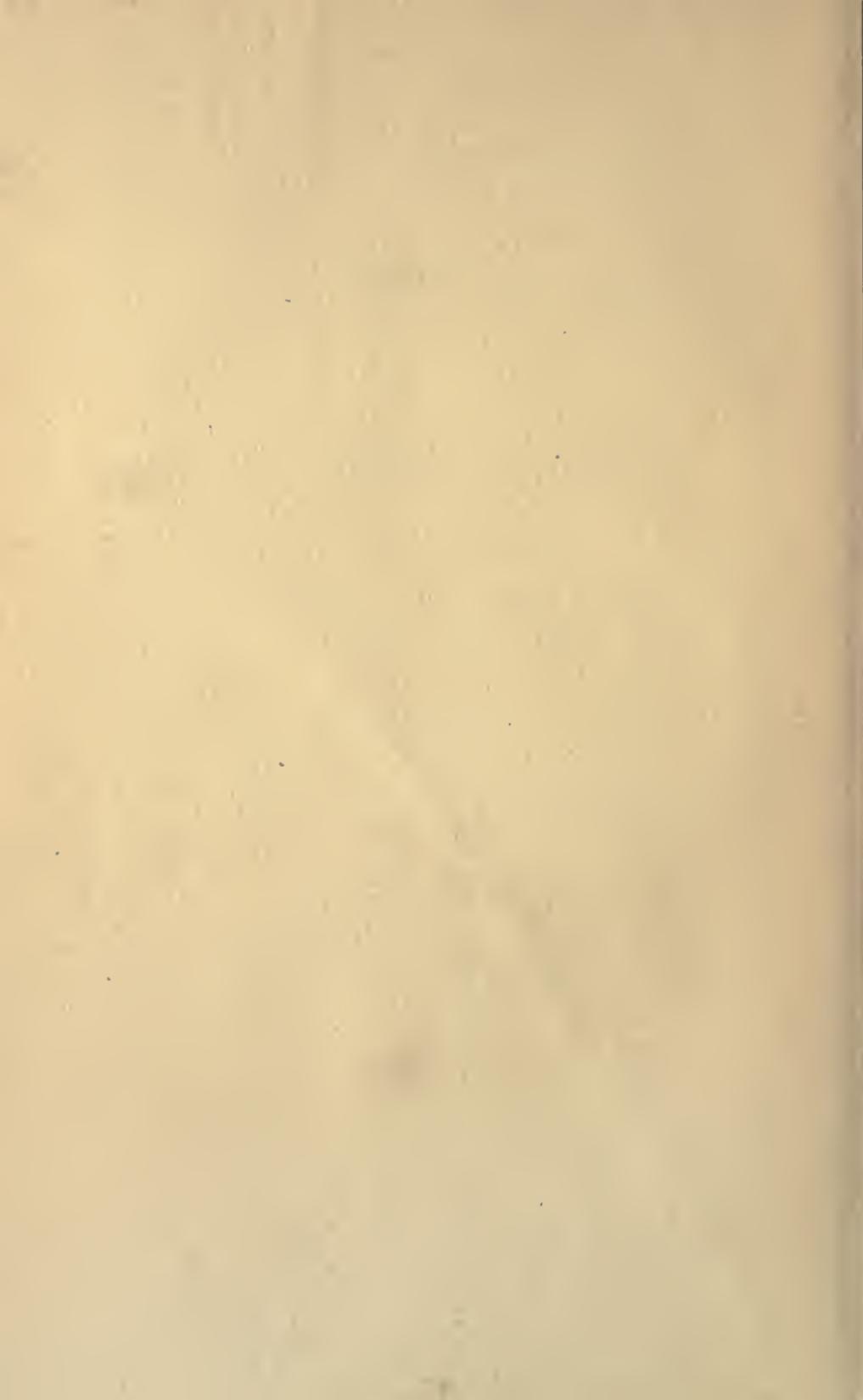
To DOROTHY  
*without whom these stories would  
never have been written.*

To F. G.  
*without whom these stories would  
never have been published.*

To WENDY  
*without whom these stories would  
never have been spoken.*

To the CHILDREN of  
GREENFIELD CHURCH  
*without whom these stories would  
never have been heard.*

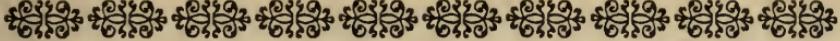
To ALL CHILDREN  
*without whom these stories would  
never come true.*



## CONTENTS

		PAGE
BOY CHRISTOPHER . . . . .	. . . . .	1
<i>The BLACKBIRD in the CITY</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	7
<i>The BOTTLE-FILLER</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	11
<i>The POLITE OGRESS</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	15
<i>The FRIGHT</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	19
<i>The RAKE</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	23
<i>The SKIPPING of HAPPY</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	27
<i>The TIDY-BETTY</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	31
<i>The STONE DOG</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	37
<i>On a FLAG DAY</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	41
<i>The GOBLINS</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	45
<i>The KITCHEN BELLS</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	49
<i>The OTHER SIDE of THINGS</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	53
<i>The OLD LAMP</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	59
BOBBIE . . . . .	. . . . .	63
ANANIAS . . . . .	. . . . .	67
A KITCHEN ADVENTURE . . . . .	. . . . .	71
JOEY . . . . .	. . . . .	75
<i>The FACE at the WINDOW</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	79
<i>The Little FORGOTTEN THINGS</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	83
<i>The POLICEMAN</i> . . . . .	. . . . .	89





## BOY CHRISTOPHER



IT happened on a bitterly cold night. There was frost, and such a sharp wind. I was walking home, and the clock had nearly reached midnight. Overhead the stars were bright, but the cold wind crept inside my overcoat. In the houses most people had gone to bed. I turned up Oak Lane and along St. Mary's Road, past the Children's Hospital. From the long windows of the hospital little lights shone. I felt something was going to happen to me, but nothing did—not then. Once or twice I thought I heard feet pattering behind me, and I looked back. I saw nobody, only a cat darting into the shadow, or a stray dog. As I went down the hill to the Grove, where we then lived, the wind blew more wildly. I heard footsteps again; pattering, pattering. I stood still a moment; then I said to myself: "Noodle," and hurried on and reached the house. I opened the door and stole in. I said, softly: "Hurrah" when I came to my room, for the fire was still alight. That was the time when we had a maid who caught the house on fire twice (only a little). You could depend on her for a fire. I poked the coal into a blaze, sat down and spread my cold hands in front of the dancing flames. The house was very quiet. All at once I heard a little knock on the outside door. I thought: "Whoever can it be at this time of night?" It came again; so I went. On the step was a boy. His feet were bare, but they did

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

not look cold. His bright eyes shone like the glittering stars. He wore a queer dress made of blue stuff, which was like the sky on a moonlit night. It flapped about his legs in the wind. His hair blew about too ; it was the colour of the most beautiful leaves in Autumn when the sun is on them.

He said : " May I come in ? My name is Christopher."

" Oh yes," I said, " come in."

I pushed him towards the door of my room. He sat down in the firelight, and I sat beside him. We didn't speak for a long time ; then he put his soft hand in mine and said : " I ran after you. I got out of the Children's Hospital only just in time."

I said : " Out of the Children's Hospital ! But how ? Tell me, who are you, and what does it all mean ? "

Christopher said : " I want to tell you. That's why I ran after you. I think you'll understand. I've been on this earth only a little while. I lived in the most wonderful land, full of every gladness. There was only one sad thing : if we liked we could look out of our world into yours. It seemed such a strange place. We saw the green fields and woods, where there were few people, and we saw black places where the people were crowded together. We saw people crushing and hurting one another. And wherever there was hurting, we saw fires burst up, and they burned and burned. But everywhere the fires were, there was also helpingness ; and when people helped, rain fell on the cruel fires, grass sprang up, birds sang, and children laughed and played. Still the fires burned and burned, and we used to say to the Dearest One, who is the Guardian of our world : ' Dearest, what will happen in that strange world if there aren't enough helpers ? '

And Dearest would say: 'The fires will burn until the world is all black and destroyed, and the people will have to go to another place to begin again.' Then we would say: 'But it's such a lovely world where the trees and grass are, where the helpers stand amid the fire.' And Dearest would answer: 'Someone from here might go and help them.' But no one wanted to go; until at last I couldn't bear the cruel fires any longer, and couldn't be happy in our dear, glad world. So I said: 'Dearest, I'll go, and I'll tell them that the helpers are saving their world and making it like ours.' And Dearest said: 'Christopher will go'; and all the others said: 'Christopher will go.' And then I felt afraid and began to cry. I cried and cried, and suddenly I was in our sweet world no longer. I was in a strange, dirty little room, and a woman was shaking me and saying: 'How he cries! Goodness, how he cries!' And I knew I had come to your world as a little baby.

"When I was still only little, I remembered I was Christopher. All babies remember the sweet land they come from. That is why they look so wise and do not speak. But when I grew bigger, my memory went away, and I only knew that I lived in the dirty house and my name was Albert Henry. When I was quite little I began to be ill, and I lay in the dirty room or crept into the black street to get warm in the sunshine. Close to our house a great factory towered. I used to look at the dirty windows and try to remember something I knew a long time ago.

"I became so ill that I had to be taken to the Children's Hospital. Then my poor mother cried, and said: 'He's been so patient. I didn't want him when he was tiny, but

## *The Legend of Lumb Lane*

now I love him.' In the tram going along to the hospital people smiled at me, and said, 'Poor little chap!' Then I felt something jump in me, and again I tried to remember. In the hospital everybody smiled at me, and the doctors and nurses were so kind. When the pain was hurting very badly, I remembered something. I said to the doctor: 'You are one of the helpers; you are putting the fires out. The grass is growing green, the birds are singing in the rain.' He said: 'Poor little fellow. He's so ill that he's talking queerly,' and he stroked my hand. My mother came when she could, and she cried and said: 'He's been such a good lad. He's made me want to be brave.'

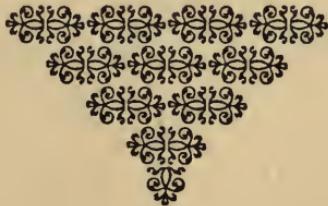
"I did not get any better. To-night, at twelve o'clock, the nurse, in a pretty pink dress, who looked after me, said: 'You're going away, and you're such a dear.' I saw a tear fall from her eyes. I said: 'You're a dear helper,' and all at once I remembered. I said: 'I know; oh, I know!' and the next moment I was in the street outside the hospital. I was my Christopher Self again, with my blue dress of the other world. I saw you hurrying past. I ran and ran and came. I wanted to tell somebody. I'm glad I came before you had gone to bed."

He stopped. I said: "Christopher, tell me, are the helpers going to win or those who hurt?" Christopher said: "If I were to tell you, perhaps you wouldn't work so hard to put out the fires. I've only told you what I've seen. You must find out the rest. Only you'll never forget, will you?" I held his hand more tightly. I said: "I'll never forget."

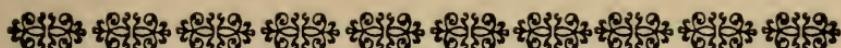
Just then the fire in the grate died down, and I shivered. A gust of wind blew in from the front door. In the hall a footstep sounded, and then it went. I looked into the

## *Boy Christopher*

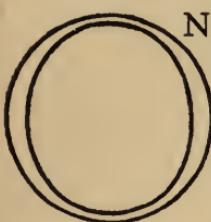
shadows. All was quiet. I got up and went to the door. The wind was sweeping down the Grove. I looked up at the sky. One star, bigger than the others, burned and glittered. It seemed to say: "Christopher has come back, Christopher has come back."







## *The BLACKBIRD in the CITY*



NE Friday Toby came to see me. Toby is sixteen, and he calls me uncle. It began—the uncle-ing, I mean—when Toby was seven. So you see we've known each other a long time, although he isn't really my nephew. Toby is awfully clever. He's passed his "matric," and written a topping essay on "The Fantastic in Poetry"; but he isn't a prig. He has fought battles and shed blood of large and bullying boys. He plays football, and his knees are mighty; and he isn't afraid to hug you if he feels like it.

Toby lives in a grey manufacturing town and goes to the Grammar School. He's in the upper sixth. And just lately he's been having a bad time; that's what he came to tell me about.

Toby writes poetry. He has written a splendid poem for the school magazine, and the poem has won a prize—a much better poem than some by Mr. Longfellow, who made quite a name for himself. But I must get back to Toby. "You see, uncle," he said, his jolly blue eyes cloudy with trouble, "the chaps in the school seem to despise me for doing this stuff. They like me all right at football, but they detest poetry. They think there's something namby-pamby about poetry. I want to go on writing it; but it's no good doing it if the people you want to like

## *The Legend of Lumb Lane*

it *don't* like it. So I'm chucking poetry and going in for engineering." "Oh," I said, "Are the other chaps keen on that?" "Well, a good many of them are keen on girls," said Toby, seriously; "it seems an engrossing pursuit. But I'm not keen on girls—not yet. I s'pose I shall be," Toby added hopefully and modestly. "Oh!" I said again. "Have you ever thought, Toby, that the sort of feeling that makes chaps in the sixth form interested in girls is what makes you keen on poetry?" "I—I dare-say," said Toby. "Only," I said, "you look at the ideal; they want the real." "I wish the ideal and the real were one and the same," said Toby. "So do I," said I. "But stick to the ideal, Toby. Do what you feel you must do, and hang engineering and what other chaps think practical." "But how am I to be sure it's worth while?" said Toby.

"Out in that dirty garden, Toby," I said, pointing out of the window of my room, "is a large and ancient pear tree. You know it well, having aforetime made your clean suits black unto despair in your explorations among the topmost boughs. You see the kind of garden it grows in—all hemmed in by little ugly houses. Far, far away from the country is our grimy garden. Well, every morning soon after dawn, even a wet and windy dawn, I am awakened by the most delicious gurglings; by the most divine singing. A blackbird comes—heaven knows from what far place he comes!—and he whistles and whistles. I lie half awake with the magic of that music all around. I can't tell you how wonderful it is. Why should he sing here in the town when there's all the green country round? Do you suppose he knows it's a hundred times sweeter to us here than to us in green mansions? Does he know

## *The Blackbird in the City*

what he means to us ? I don't know ; but I *do* know that his whistling makes a grey city garden magic in the early morning. See ? ”

“ You mean,” said Toby slowly, “ I've got to do what's in me all the more because it's not expected nor usual in a manufacturing town.”

“ I do,” I said. “ We want all the blackbirds who are intrepid enough to sing in a sooty city.”

“ I see,” said Toby. “ But you *do* like the blackbird. They *don't* like my poetry. They'd like to shut my mouth.”

“ Underneath our tree, where the blackbird sings to the dawn, there sits Tom Halliwell, the next door cat,” I said, “ Patiently, patiently. He has no use for blackbirds' songs. He's killed many blackbirds. So there he sits ; for he, too, gets up with the dawn. And always he watches, watches. He sees the trembling ripples in the blackbird's throat ; and he longs to silence the song of that throat for ever. But the blackbird, perhaps, sings all the more madly because danger lurks beneath him. It's an adventure to sing the dawn in, with a black cat below—waiting, hoping, longing to spring.”

“ I see,” said Toby.

“ Apologies for slight sermon ! ” I said. “ Now, tea's coming in. Hot potato cakes, Toby—specially for you. And for me—toast, very buttery.”



## *The BOTTLE-FILLER*

THE house in Yorkshire where I live is difficult to find. It is hidden behind another, and cannot be seen from the street. But people are very persevering and look us up at all hours of the day and night. The walls on the left side are damp, and mushrooms grow plentifully on the dining-room floor. We have overcome difficulties of dampness by painting the furniture crimson and green and orange, so however damp it feels it looks bright and cheerful. And perhaps that is why so many people come to stay with us. I don't know; they do come. And, on the night I am telling you about, three people from three different places turned up at four, five and six o'clock, and said they would stay the night if it was all right to us. Of course we said it was, and after an early supper everybody but myself went out to—well, I needn't tell you where they went. Miss Emily, the housekeeper, had gone away for a few days, so I promised to get all the bottles and overcoats ready for the beds. We have five hot-water bottles and eight blankets, which are quite enough for a family of five or six, when you add all the overcoats. I was left alone in the still house.

I worked hard at a sermon until 10-30, and then, remembering my promise, I went out into the kitchen to make the water hot for the bottles. There was still a little flickering

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

fire. I put all the five bottles on the table and the kettles on the gas-stove, and sat down. And it was just then somehow I felt aggrieved. It was too bad, I felt, for a preacher, a prophet, to be asked to do things like filling hot-water bottles. I wondered what my church would say if everybody knew. I wondered if any other husbands and ministers filled hot-water bottles for guests who rampaged into the house at odd times. I felt really upset and annoyed, for I was in the very middle of writing a helpful sermon on "The Great Tasks Ahead."

It was at that moment I heard William Murgatroyd speaking. William Murgatroyd is the kitchen rocking-chair. He belongs to Miss Emily for better or for worse. She brought him with her. He is unlike anything else in the house. He is made of mahogany and horsehair, shiny and stiff. He wears a woolly pink and cream antimacassar on his back, or rather on the front of his back. We call him by his name because he came to us from the house of Murgatroyd. He is forty-eight years old and rocks in a most stately way. "I am not pleased with my treatment here" said the wooden voice of William Murgatroyd. "You're not alone in that," said the brass preserving-pan. "They used me to boil their Christmas puddings in, if you please." "Miss Emily is sound enough, but I dislike the ways of the mistress," went on William Murgatroyd. "She rushes into the kitchen, swirls around, laughs at me and calls me an ancient monument. I am older than she is, but that ought to make her respectful. She often abuses me simply because she bangs her ankles against my beautiful protruding rockers." "That's nothing," sighed the wicker chair on the other side of the fireplace. "I'm living in daily dread she'll paint me purple." "Horrible," shuddered

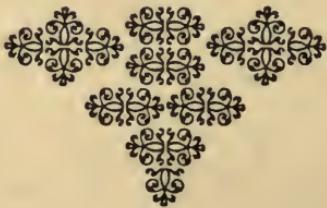
W. M., and he went on : " I think we ought to be treated with the utmost consideration and only used for the purpose for which we were intended. I feel most upset when I am used as a rocking-horse for the noisy children who will invade this house." I began to feel rather sympathetic to William Murgatroyd. " I've lived," he said, " in a good Yorkshire family until now, and I can't say I take a fancy to Southerners." " Oh, but do remember our dear master," said the coal-scuttle. " He is so gentle with me. Sometimes he fills me up with coal, but never too much. Often he only half fills me for fear the burden will be too heavy for me to bear." " You silly," cried Molly, the little green kettle, " that's because he's thinking of himself, not you."

I was just going to interrupt when from the window corner such a pleasant voice spoke. It was the golf club, called a cleek. It stood tall and slim, with its rusty head raised proudly. " Perhaps none of you know that I lived close to the sea once upon a time," said the golf club. " I was seldom indoors. I used to swing through the wind. Whack I would go against the ball. I lived in a bag with the others of my family, and was often swung over the shoulders of most delightful folk. I used to have many adventures then. But I was taken a long journey. I lost all my family. I alone came to this house and was put here in this corner. And every morning they use me to push back the curtains. Of course, I miss the country by the sea. I loved the green hills, the sand dunes, and the tall fir tree by the gate. But from my corner here I often peep up at the stars and watch the moon creep up over the house-tops. And I must say I disagree with William Murgatroyd. I like the house. I like the mistress. I love to see her rushing

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

round. It reminds me of my life out of doors. True, I was not meant for a curtain-pusher ; but one must do the thing that's nearest and be glad of any strange adventure that happens." "That's the talk of a foreigner," growled William Murgatroyd. "I'm Yorkshire, and Yorkshire ways and Yorkshire work is enough for me. I believe in a rocking-chair being a rocking-chair and a golf club being a golf club." "Oh, but I don't," said the golf club, gently, "nor a parson being always a parson. I think it is nice to see him sometimes a hot-water bottle-filler."

Just then there was a row at the front door. "Here we are," cried a voice. And, with a humble nod to the golf club, I began to fill the bottles.



## The POLITE OGRESS

HIS adventure happened one Monday in Summer, when Nancy and Pampa and Doshee came to a tea party in our garden. Nancy is five, Pampa and Doshee are really grandpa and grandma; but they are like young pretend grandparents; so Nancy calls them Doshee and Pampa. Pampa is a very gallant gentleman, who has been very ill, and lost both his feet; so he came in his wheel-chair-carriage.

Nancy brought with her the dear children, which are two fat teddy bears, named Edward White and Edward Brown, and a rather fierce-staring doll called Violet. Violet was decidedly stiff, and we didn't know Nancy awfully well then, and that was why things were a little queer at first. Happy introduced the Edwards and the Violet child to her pet monkey with a green jacket and red cap, whose name is Alberto Benvenuto Cellini. They all sat on a long seat by the garden bushes. The ears of the Edwards flopped tiredly. They both were wearing pyjamas as the day was hot. Alberto Benvenuto looked in front of him with bright brown eyes. Violet sat stiffly upright. Then we began to have tea.

We were most dreadfully polite. We said: "Nice weather we're having. Nicer than the nasty weather last week." "Do take a little cake." "These jam puffs are really delicious." "No, thank you. A little bread and

## *The Legends of Lamb Lane*

butter, if you please." And I felt inside that horrid feeling you have when you know it is going to be a dull, disappointing, shy, polite party. I thought : " What a pity ! We're all being specially nice instead of ordinarily happily nice."

Just as I thought this, I saw Her. Ugh ! She was sitting in the middle—a prim, solemn lady, wearing brown kid gloves. Her hands were crossed in her lap. On her forehead was a deep frown. When anybody spilt a crumb, she brushed it away. If anybody said : " I hate," she said : " dislike extremely." In my heart I thought : " I'll climb the old pear-tree after tea ; " but she looked at me in the way that makes you creepy. Whenever she looked at me I went round and round inside my own head, trying to think of something polite to say next.

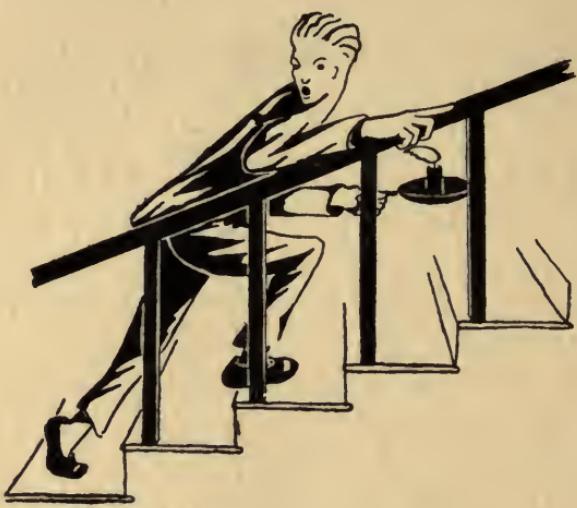
At last I couldn't bear it any longer. I said to myself : " I know who you are. You're the Polite Ogress, Mrs. Primshy Specially nice." And aloud I shouted : " It is jolly to have you all. It's jolly ! jolly ! " The Ogress frowned worse than ever. But just as I said " jolly," He came—Dearest, the Playmate. He softly crept from the shade of the trees and sat close to us. As He came, the Polite Ogress simply melted away. Dearest smiled. Pampa began to sing what is called a ribald song—a silly, laughing, lovely song. Each line ended " What an afternoon ! "..... " The tintacks lay thick in the jam. What an afternoon ! " Doshee said : " I must climb that pear-tree." Nancy said : " Let's play pretend. Oh, yes, quick ! I'll make Edward Brown be cruel to Alberto Ben—— what's his name. You be a policeman. Oh, yes, quick ! " So I went and put on my aged and only top hat, and held the umbrella we borrowed some time ago, and made myself look such a silly. Pampa

## *The Polite Ogress*

was the judge sitting in his court, which was really his wheel chair. We all laughed. Dearest laughed, too. Dearest told us lots more pretends, and we played and played. It was a most lovely party ; and oh ! I was sorry when it was over.

We tucked Pampa in his chair-carriage. We all helped to push it down the path to the gate. Dearest put out his hand and pushed, too. In the carriage rode Pampa, and Edward White, and Edward Brown, and Violet, who was trying hard to smile. We called : "Good-bye. Come again soon." Then Happy and I cleared away the tea things, and Dearest, the invisible Playmate, stole away among the shadows in the garden.





## *The FRIGHT*

IT happened on a Friday night, when all children were in bed, or jolly well ought to have been. I was sitting at my desk in the yellow room where I work. I was alone in the house, and it was very quiet. Only now and then I heard the grind of a tram, or the pattering of the red leaves falling from the creeper by the window, which was open a little at the bottom. The mouse, who lives by my fireplace, came out to inquire how I was getting on; but there were no other visitors. Suddenly I jumped badly. Outside in the garden, close to my window, there was a mysterious rustle. At first I thought it was Charles Hargreaves, the cat from opposite. But no! There were no green eyes glaring and no black paw coming into the yellow room. Rustle, rustle, on the fallen leaves! Somebody had crept up to my window and was looking in. I went quickly from the room and opened the front door and hurried out into the dark garden, grasping courageously my fountain-pen. A moon was sailing high in the sky, but I could scarcely see. Then I heard something stirring in the darkness within reach of my arms. I was afraid to move, because I didn't know whom I should put my arms round. I said sharply: "Hullo! Who's that?" The garden gate very quietly opened, and I saw a shadow slip into the street. I stood still for ten moments, wondering; then I ran after

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

the shadow. I was just in time to see it disappear round the corner by the lamp-post.

I came back to my yellow room and felt angry. I thought : “ It’s a horrid world, where people come and peep at you.” I remembered people who had grudges and wanted my blood. I tried to go on writing ; but it was hard. The clock ticked solemnly. It was eleven o’clock. The house was becoming creepy. I heard a noise like a tin falling in the kitchen. I didn’t dare to go and see what it was. The only light burning was on my desk. I was sure I heard soft footsteps in the hall. The clock ticked solemnly. I couldn’t work. Twelve o’clock ! Happy was very late coming home. (Happy, you may know, is the lady who sits opposite to me at breakfast). I felt wretched. I thought of burglars, spies and detectives. My door creaked. I sat still and shivered. I gazed across the dim room at the door. I could have sworn it moved. I stood up on the hearthrug, prepared to keep cool. The fire scorched my legs. I noticed a paper bag hidden behind a photo on the mantelpiece and found five toffee drops. I ate them for comfort. The clock ticked solemnly. Half past twelve ! Then the garden gate clanged. Relief ! Happy rushed into the house. “ Wherever have you been ? ” I said crossly. “ You know how frightened waiting makes me when I don’t know where you are.” “ I’ve been visiting YOUR flock,” said Happy, more sharply than she usually speaks. (The “ flock ” is the people I look after). “ Well, you’re dreadfully late,” I said. “ I am,” said Happy, severely, “ and also weary : and it is very disappointing to come in and find neither a bright smile nor a cup of hot coffee waiting for one. I shall have to eat five toffee drops I’ve saved.” “ You can’t ! ” I cried, “ I’ve eaten them. And good reason, too.

I've had an awful time." And I told her all about the peeper and the creepings and strange noises. Telling Happy made things worse. We locked up—a thing we generally forgot to do—and went nervously upstairs. We felt certain someone horrible was clambering up the ivy and looking with pale face through the bedroom window. We slept but lightly, and had terrifying dreams, and woke with beating hearts to see dawn coming over the roofs.

Happy was downstairs first. She generally is. The morning was sunny. I was shaving, when I heard a shriek from downstairs. "Murdered!" I gasped; and, armed with my safety razor, rushed down. In the hall Happy was crying: "Come at once, you frightened thing! Come and see!" I went into my room, all goldy in the morning. On the window-sill lay a huge bunch of Michaelmas daisies. They had been placed there the night before by the dear shadow who stole away. I opened the window and took them in. Their beautiful eyes seemed to be saying "We came with affection and you were afraid. We brought beauty and you gave suspicion.

"Just fancy!" said Happy. "We locked the door and shut out—Michaelmas daisies!"





## The RAKE

THE only difference between stories told in church and other stories is that stories in church are supposed to be improving. To be an improved child means to be even nicer than you are naturally, and that is unnaturally nice. And that is why some people think my stories not very improving; but my stories have inner meanings and hidden improvements. So now you know, and I will begin my hiddenly improving story.

One Thursday morning I got up to light the kitchen fire. The time was eight o'clock. Miss Emily, who used to light our fires, has had to go and light fires for people who aren't nearly as nice as we are, although we aren't always as nice as we seem. Miss Emily could tell you a thing or two about the difference between hearing a man preach and meeting the same man at breakfast-time. We are lighting our own fires for a few weeks, so I got up. The morning was cold and damp, and I had forgotten to take coal up the night before. I shivered and looked at the cindery stove. I scraped a little with the poker. A cloud of dust flew out. I blinked and rolled up yesterday's *Yorkshire Observer* and shoved it in. Then I put in a fire-lighter, four sticks and some small lumps of coal. The first match went out; the second caught the paper. It blazed up—then there was a sickening thud, and down

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

went the sticks and the coal—a sort of collapse. The flame flickered and went out. I poked in some more paper. The fire-lighter caught; and went out. I scraped away the coal and got some more sticks, and—I am ashamed to say—the large end of a candle. There was a cold flare, a glitter of melted wax, and then—darkness. My fingers were black. I'd somehow knocked the first one, and it bled a little. From habit I sucked it.

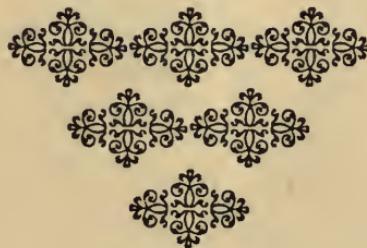
The time was ten past eight. I felt cross. The weather wept tears on the window for me. I squared my shoulders and went into the pantry. Very guiltily I seized some dripping. I slapped out a piece on to the black coals and set it alight. There was a sizzle-sizzle. Up sprang the flame. "Hurrah!" I thought: "I daresay dripping doesn't cost much." I went back to fill the kettle. When I came back the last sizzle-sizzle came from the fire. It went out. I was desperate. I went to look for the turpentine—a dangerous and wicked thing to do. I was ashamed of disgracing myself; but luckily there was no turpentine. So I sacrificed four tapers.

I was drearily watching the feeble flame of the tapers die out when there was a stir beside me. I looked round, and there stood—an Angel. It's as true as I write this. "Why is there no fire?" said the Angel. "I don't know," I said crossly. "I can't get the beastly thing to light. It won't. It seems dead." The Angel went to the corner and pulled out a long iron thing with a flat scoop at the end. "Now let's see," said the Angel. And I watched very grumpily while the Angel lifted out the old coal and the charred sticks and the cindery bits, and poked the rake back and back. "Why, look!" said the Angel. "No wonder it wouldn't draw, nor light; the draught hole is

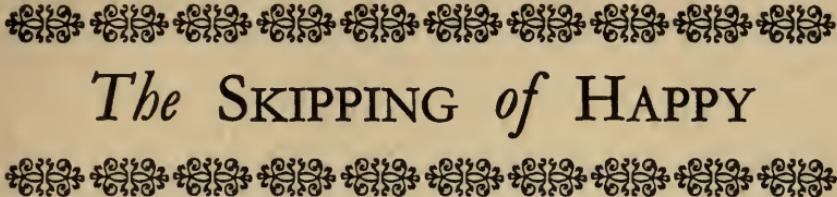
choked up." Out came the dust—heaps of it. "Now," said the Angel, and soon in went the paper, the sticks and the coal. Soon there was a blaze, with the quick, hollow sound which you always know is going to last.

"If you're going to light a fire, or do anything, you've simply *got* to be thorough," said the Angel. I looked sulky. "I'm only just beginning to learn it myself," said the Angel. And I felt better.

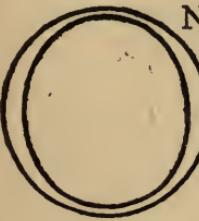
Perhaps I ought to tell you that the Angel wore a bright yellow jumper and old slippers with scarlet heels.







## The SKIPPING of HAPPY



NE dull Saturday I had to go for lunch to the middle of our city. We often have lunch at a restaurant called "The Beanstalk." Everybody knows everybody else at "The Beanstalk," and you call the waitresses by their proper names. You don't say: "Hi ! Miss"; you say, "Miss Murgatroyd, may I have some sugar, please ? Just this once." It is really very jolly, and it saves washing up the dishes at home.

On Saturday mornings the trams are full ; and the street called Darley Street, where most of the shops are, is packed with grand ladies, who are all in their best clothes for each other to see. In Darley Street there is a library—a very nice and special library, looked after by three nice and special ladies—where you can get every sort of book, and warm yourself at blazing fires, and hear about the latest wedding and everything else. A great many of the grand ladies go to get books—story books—out for Sunday afternoon. In a long stream they pass into the library ; and when I happened to go into the library last Saturday week I held open the door for one who came behind me. She was young and pretty, and she passed in with her little chin in the air. She didn't say, "Thank you." Close behind her came a tall, thin, fierce lady, and I held the door for her. We have to be polite to the fierce and thin as well as the young and pretty. She too passed in, and

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

didn't look at me or say anything. Up the stairs she went. Then along came a third. She was rather stout and wore a fur coat. She was the sort of person who has maids in stiff collars who never smile when they show you into the room. I still held the door, and she also passed in. She looked as though she thought I was one of those gentlemen who are paid sixpence an hour for holding open doors. I looked so solemn, I suppose. I saw a fourth coming, and I couldn't stand any more; so I let the door go. Thud! it swung against her. I only heard a sort of gasp. It was a pity. She may have been one of the many jolly ones who go to the library. But I couldn't help it. I ran upstairs, and up again from the first to the second floor, where there aren't any story books, but only very fat, heavy books, and where most people don't go, but only those who want fat books, and grammar-school boys who want to do their Latin cribs. It was very quiet up there, and I sank into a chair by the window. Far below in the street I saw the people hurrying along or peering into the shop windows to see what they liked and didn't like. They all looked as if they hadn't many friends. I thought: "How horrid people are not to say, 'Thank you' or 'Hello!' or smile." I felt rather cross. I hated the proud, grand people. I thought them silly. I thought it a horrid world where people don't smile at openers of doors. Then I thought: "How lovely if one could only make everybody smile at everybody, and everybody dance and skip instead of walking and pushing coldly past everybody else."

And then I thought: "Why, bless my life! I will make them. Why shouldn't I? I'll go and do it now. I'll skip all the way down Darley Street." And, as I said this, I flew down the stairs and into the street, and began to skip.

## *The Skipping of Happy*

Magic skipping it was. Everybody began to do it, too. The grand ladies did it. People came out of the shops and laughed and joined the skipping. Men left cutting bacon and selling crêpe de chine, and skipped instead. All the people, stout and thin, agreeable and disagreeable, old and young, rich and poor, laughed and skipped. And the sun came out to see them. Gentlemen left talking business in the important place called "Exchange," flower girls left their baskets, clerks left the money in the banks, and all danced and skipped out and round about. A man with a crutch threw it up into the air and cried "Hurrah!" And I led the skipping crowd like the Pied Piper led the children long ago. Into the big square by the railway station we went. Suddenly a tram glided up; it seemed ready to join the skipping. Something flashed.... And I heard a voice saying: "Well, I'm blessed! Sleeping in the library." I looked up. There was—Happy. Happy laughing, and the smell of fat books, and down in the street the people coldly pushing and strolling and hurrying by.

Of course, I told Happy. She said: "What a lovely dream! Let's, oh! let's do it. Really, I mean. Perhaps they will all skip. Come on." I laughed. I didn't think she meant it. We went down the stairs—really, this time. And, sure enough, she did it. Down Darley Street, among all the grand ladies, she did it. I felt quite ill. At first I tried to look as if she didn't belong to me. Then I tried to look like a nice, kind, patient uncle. "You're not doing it," Happy said. I am ashamed of it now; but I crept behind two ladies. Happy went on skipping—one, two, three. People glared in surprise. They seemed horrified. I heard one lady say: "My dear, do you see who that is?"

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

....you know....she was preaching a week ago, and now skipping ! ” I saw Happy’s bobbing head far down the street. I blushed a little more, and then I suddenly felt better. “ What’s wrong in skipping ? ” I thought. “ It’s not rude, or horrid, or hateful. Why am I, and why is everybody, afraid to do it ? Why is the old world so dull ? ”

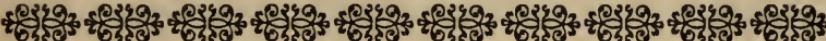
I went on thinking, and I reached the restaurant. There was Happy. Her voice was sadder than I like to hear it. “ Oh, you spoil-sport ! ” she said. “ I did it all the way. But it wouldn’t work. Nobody else did it ; and I bumped into a policeman.” I said : “ I know I was afraid ; it’s a queer old world at present ; it’s too ugly to skip in. Who will make it a world to dance and skip in ? Whoever will ? ” Happy’s voice became joyful again. “ I know.” she said ; “ Children will.”

I said : “ Haricot steak, chip potatoes and beetroot, Miss Murgatroyd, please.”





## *The TIDY-BETTY*



[[ DARESAY, if you saw me, you would think I was a very tidy person. Lots of people do. Just because I manage to keep my longish hair rather neat and my study-books in rows, they think that I must be a comfort to live with. And they think that Happy, who loses hatpins and diaries and the key of the front door, must be a constant trial. This only shows how silly it is to decide what people are like by their outside.

Now, really and truly I must tell you that I hate, or did hate, being tidy each minute. I like to wait a while, and then have one big jolly clear-up. When one is hurrying, it is such a nuisance to put one's collars all back straight, or to hang one's coat on the shoulder thing, or to put one's slippers on the shelf. I often say, when told about it: "You see, I shall want them again so soon." And this is how I came to have this story to tell, and why I have turned over a new leaf, as they say in good books.

I can't quite understand it, but we always have maids who have nice dispositions, and yet catch cold. They think it is because they are made to sleep with their windows open, but that, as you know, is sheer nonsense. Anyway, our maid—the young and singing one—caught cold and her voice got thicker and thicker, and her blood began to boil. You know, when you're ill that funny little glass thing, called a thermometer, has to be put into your mouth, and

## *The Legends of Lamb Lane*

then it tells how ill you are. Well, we tried the thermometer, and it said she was six times worse than she ought to have been. So we sent for the doctor. He said she had a demon called quinsy, and must stay in bed and have hot poultices and things. The doctor sent some very nasty medicine, and every time she was given a dose she gasped thickly: "Moses;" so you see she was very bad. But she was the cheerfulness girl I've ever seen, and she lay watching the fire and smiling all day long. But this was only the beginning.

At six o'clock in the morning the fires had to be lit, the grates polished, the carpets brushed. It is rather jolly to clear away like magic last night's messes. But I was told that I didn't do things thoroughly, and that I'd better stay in bed till the breakfast was nearly ready. I felt a little hurt when told this, but not quite so hurt the next morning, when it would have been time to get up if I had been thorough. However, I had some jobs set for me. I cleaned the boots and fetched the coal and tidied my papers and emptied the Tidy-Betty. The Tidy-Betty is the thing which catches all the dust and cinders which fall from the kitchen fire. Now, do you know? I grew in a few days to hate the Tidy-Betty. She stared at me so full and dusty and heavy; she looked so ugly and untidy in the mornings. First, I pulled her so hard that her shiny knob came off and tipped the dust and cinders on the clean floor. Quite unjustly someone said to me: "Oh, clumsy! Go away and let me do it." And I thought I heard Tidy-Betty creak nastily. Then, when I emptied the dust into the bin by the back door, it all flew up into my face and eyes, and I felt sure the next-door people were laughing behind their curtains. After the first few days I got tired of looking after Tidy-Betty, and I left her alone. I had a sort of feeling

she might get done somehow. But Happy said, severely : “ The Tidy-Betty is an eyesore, but I shall not touch her. The stove shines and is ashamed of her, and the red rug blushes to see her.” But I didn’t care. I left her (Tidy-Betty, I mean), and the fuller of dust she became the more I hated her. And on Thursday Happy said : “ Tidy-Betty is shedding ashes everywhere. I won’t listen to a word of your sermon on Sunday if you neglect her any longer.” So I went in a hurry. “ Stupid thing ! ” I muttered. “ Stupid fires, making dust ! Stupid houses ! Stupid dustbin ! There, go in ! ” and a cloud of dust rose as I banged Tidy-Betty against the bin. Then I carried her back to the kitchen. The fire was bright, and the red rug laughed fatly to see clean Tidy-Betty. Everything looked so comfortable that I sat down in the arm-chair. I looked at the glowing fire ; I looked at Tidy-Betty, and I felt what a kind man I was—what a help, what a joy—so tidy really —what a treasure in the home. I thought of all the untidy men there are—the cruel husbands who would never empty Tidy-Betties. Then, quite suddenly, at nine o’clock in the morning, it happened. You remember how magic our kitchen is. Everything went away from me. The fire faded ; the stove melted ; the red rug sailed off. I clutched at things and caught nothing. I was falling, falling . . . . .

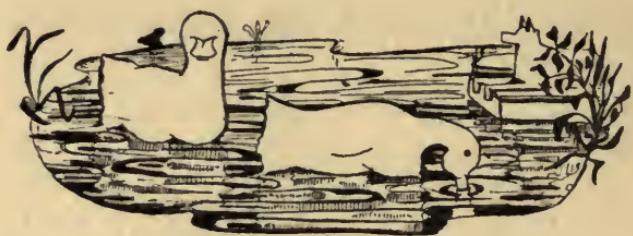
When I stopped falling I was in a strange place, with lots of people and children and—yes, some of you were there. I won’t say names, for you wouldn’t like it if I did. I will keep it to myself. There was a long road with rocks and trees and clouds like ships and tame mice and rabbits and wild animals too. High on a hill there gleamed a most wonderful city, and from this far-away city there came the happiest shouting of children who were playing the

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

loveliest games. Then I knew that you and I and everybody were trying to reach that city on the hill. I said to you : "Oh, let's hurry. Such fun up there ;" and you said to me : "Yes ; do come on." So we tried, and we couldn't. Something was dragging us back. I looked down, and there, tied to my ankle—what do you think ?—Tidy-Betty, full of dust and ashes. I couldn't tip them out. I felt awful. Then I looked at you, and some of you had toys and books hanging on, and one girl had hundreds of ribbons and gloves and things round her ankles, and every time she stepped she fell down. And there was one boy wading through a stodge of all the rice pudding he wouldn't finish when he was at home. Perfectly dreadful ! People passed us on the way up. The Happy One passed with her keys and purses and things jingling. They didn't seem to bother her. And your parents passed. They all tried to help us ; but nobody could do anything much. We just had to push on by ourselves. And I said to you : "Oh, if only I could go back to where we were with Tidy-Betty and rice puddings and ribbons and gloves, I'd never, never be untidy again." And you said : "No ; and we wouldn't." And the girl who kept tripping on her ribbons said : "Let's shut our eyes tight and say : 'Please, Guardian of the City, let us go back and clear up, so as to be able to come up quicker.' " So we did. Then we opened our eyes, and very slowly the hill went away and you went away. I was back in the kitchen, and somebody was saying : "Oh, you've emptied the Tidy-Betty. You are a dear. And do you know ? I found the front doorkey in my diary, and I'd put the diary and it in your tobacco cupboard to be safe." And we laughed.

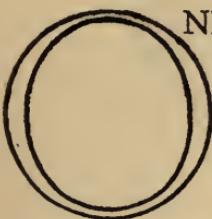
So you understand why I've made a fresh start.







## The STONE DOG



ONE of the nice things about being ill is getting better and going away for a "change." And it was when my illness was nearly over, I thought of the "change" I would like. I wanted to go to far-away Cornwall, where the green buds were bursting in the hedges and where you can have plenty of potatoes. But it costs a lot to-day to buy a railway ticket for a long way. So instead of going to Cornwall I went to Southfield Square for a change. Of course, Happy went too. Southfield Square is five streets away from where we live, and the last street is called Lumb Lane. There is more Lumb than lane about it now. There are some nice houses, my church, three fried fish shops, a mill and the Infirmary in Lumb Lane. You can tell it is interesting. In Southfield Square live the Dear Philosopher and the Play-Lady. The Philosopher is a very wise man and looks wiser than anyone could possibly be. The Play-Lady knows all the oldest and best games in the world and can teach them to children who have nearly forgotten how to play. We had a perfectly lovely time in the Play-Lady's house. From the front windows you can see trees—rather dirty trees, but trees all the same. All this has really nothing to do with my story; but I like to tell you everything. The first morning, unlike most first mornings of a

## *The Legends of Lamb Lane*

“change,” was warm and sunny. I began to dream of the Cornish lanes and sea. Then the Philosopher said : “ We’ll go for a picnic.” I said : “ Where?” He answered, “ Peel Park.” I said : “ Oh ! ” Peel Park is in our city. There are houses round it. I looked at Happy. She hates parks exactly 8,000 times more than I do. She said : “ I *do* wish I could go, Lady Dear ; but I must run home and do a few hours’ spring cleaning.” I said : “ Cruel and base deserter.” Happy looked at me. Her eyes are blue, and they seemed to say : “ Remember the sea of sunny Cornwall, and spare me.” So I said : “ All right ! you go and clean, and we’ll go to the park.” So we went—the Dear Philosopher, the Play-Lady and I.

It really was jolly nice—heaps nicer than I thought it was going to be. The sunshine was hot, and we sat on a seat by the lake and ate sandwiches, cheese and bananas, and drank tea from a flask. I quite forgot about the big city and the houses all around. In the lake near where we sat was a little island covered with bushes, and among the bushes I suddenly saw a stone dog—a sort of statue, you know. He sat there still and staring—a little chipped and with ivy clinging to his feet. I got up and walked nearer to look at him. I wondered where he came from. Some ducks were splashing in the water round the island ; and all at once there sounded a crack in my ears, and I could hear two of the ducks talking. They were quarrelling about whose lake it was. One quacked : “ You stupid ! I tell you it belongs to all the ducks.” The other quacked : “ Stupid yourself ; it belongs to the stout gentleman who walks past every morning. He looks as if all the world belongs to him ; so the lake must be his.” “ Your eyes are only fit for the bottom of the lake.” “ They’re as good

as yours, anyhow, you conceited infant." "They're not." "They are." "They're not." "They are." The two ducks were just beginning to fight when I saw the stone dog's eyes blink, and he spoke : "Bow-wow. I say, come and help here, will you ? There's a thrush caught in the bushes." The two ducks looked, and I looked. Sure enough, a little spotted thrush was beating and tearing its wings—caught in a tangle of old wire netting and bushes. "Half a moment," cried one of the ducks ; and both of them swam for their lives and reached the bushes. "Keep still," they said, "We'll hold the bushes, and then you can get out." The thrush looked at them with bright and grateful eyes, while with their yellow beaks they reached up and held the bushes and netting. In a moment the thrush got free and flew away. The ducks looked up at the dog. "That's done it," they said. "Good business," said the dog. "But what were you talking about so loudly when I called ?" "Oh, nothing," said one of the ducks. The other said : "Hullo ! There's a man with some crumbs. Come on ; I'll race you." "Right O !" quacked the first one.

I threw the ducks some bits of bread, and then I went back to the seat. The Play-Lady said : "Listen to that thrush singing."





## On a FLAG DAY

IT was when we had a flag day in our city. Everybody in the streets bought little white flags with blue letters N.S.P.C.C. Of course, you know what these letters stand for—National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children ; and they mean that nobody who is big is to hurt anybody who is small.

The most exciting thing about the day was a shop window in a busy street called Kirkgate. Stuck on the glass was a picture of some horribly poor children, thin and sad looking. And holding out his arms to them with a good, kind smile was a nice gentleman in navy blue—a sort of beautiful policeman. He was one of the officers of the N.S.P.C.C., who live all over England to see that the big are not cruel to the little. If they are, and the nice gentleman in navy blue sees them at it, he soon stops them.

But in the window underneath this picture were some most horrid things. Long leather belts with cruel clasps ; whips with fierce knots ; a chain with a padlock ; a poker ; a hard, thick stick. And all these things had labels like this : “ This belt was taken from a stepfather who beat his boy with it.” “ This whip came from a mother who thrashed a tiny girl.” “ This chain was used by a clergyman to chain his child to the bed-post.” “ This poker was used to bruise two children.” Ugh ! it was a horrid, horrid window. Of course, it was to teach people to hate being

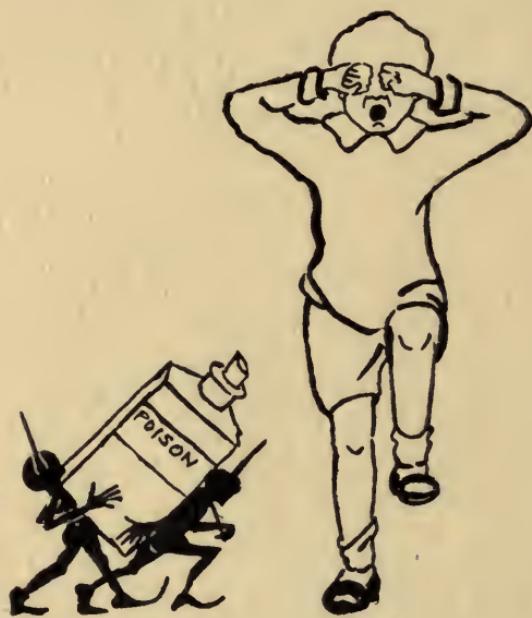
## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

cruel. And all round the window were boys and girls, and their noses were pressed against the cold glass, and their clever little eyes were reading the labels. The big children read them for the little. Then I came and read them too.

I was feeling all miserable to think people had ever been so cruel, when I heard a boy say : "Come on, our Thomas ; don't you stand there readin' about fathers beating lasses and lads. Our Emily's cold, aren't you, luv ?" And I looked round and saw a boy holding a baby in his arms. The baby was "our Emily." She had a little red woollen hood and very dark, sweet eyes. The boy who held little Emily said : "Come on, now ; I've got threepence carryin' a bag to station, and our Emily an' all ; and I'm goin' to the Market to buy somethin' for 'er. Come on, lad." "Our Thomas" gave one last look at the chain of the cruel clergyman, and then they all three went along Kirkgate. I watched them dodging in and out among the people. Once the boy, whose name I didn't know, stopped to pull the shawl closer round "our Emily," and to kiss her. Her little arm was round his neck. I watched and watched. I wanted to run after them and say to the boy : "You splendid chap !" But I daren't. I knew he would have answered : "Now then, who're you getting at ?" So I just watched the last speck of red, which was Emily's bonnet, disappear ; and then I looked back at the horrible window. Suddenly I saw in the wall by the window a little green door. I stared. Something seemed to say to me : "Go in." I went up to the green door and pushed it. It opened. I went inside, and the door swung to. And then I said to myself : "This isn't our city. It can't be." For I was in a most heavenly garden. The grass was green and smooth. Old men were rolling the grass

and singing to themselves in funny, happy quavery voices. The trees were nearly bare ; only on some the sun shone and made them gold. Winter flowers grew—chrysanthemums in huge bushes and yellow jasmine climbing the wall. I walked on and on, and presently, sitting by the door of the home-iest house, I saw lots of children, and I knew somehow that they were the children who had been hurt by the big and strong. They were clambering round a man in navy blue with a dear, kind face, and he had been telling them a story. I crept closer, and as I came one boy said : “ Will there always be you to care for the little and the hurt ? ” The kind man said : “ No. Not always.” And all the children and I, too, cried : “ Oh, why ? why ? ” And he said : “ Look ! ” We looked through the trees and saw a street, dark and cold ; a window of cruel things, and a boy holding a baby and wrapping a shawl tightly round her. Then he kissed her, and his voice came to us clear and plain : “ There, Emily, luv, I’ll keep you warm. We’re all goin’ to the Market to buy something for threepence.” The kind man spoke again. He said : “ Now you’ve seen that, do you understand why I shall not always need to be here ? ” And we nodded our heads and looked very wise. Perhaps some of us knew and some of us didn’t. But you, because you are children, you can guess.

And then ! Somebody said : “ Shove along. You’re stopping the traffic,” and I found I had banged right into a big policeman, who always stands in Kirkgate waving his white gloves about. And I suppose even you will say : “ How could you dream in the cold and busy street ? ” And if we looked to-morrow, neither you nor I would find any little green door.



## The GOBLINS

IT was on a snowy Tuesday that the Big Bear, the Happy Bear and the Little Bear set out for a walk across the moors. I will tell you at once that I was the Little Bear. Of course, I'm not little when seen by myself, but I'm little when the Big Bear is near. The Big Bear is a Master at the Grammar School when he is not having holidays. The Happy Bear is the one who has breakfast with me every morning. I mustn't tell you the real names of the other two of us, because they have threatened never to come to my church again, if I do.

We began like this. I didn't want to go for a walk. I said I hated the moors, and had no time for moors, and I must work. Then the Big Bear said he'd carry me if I wouldn't walk, and the Happy Bear called me rude and unloving names. So we went on growling till we missed the train and the only thing to be done was to take the tram to a place called Shipley Glen. And in the end that was what we did.

At first I sat in the tram sulkily. I didn't like being dragged out. I didn't like the Big Bear and the Happy Bear very much. Besides, they looked warm and comfortable, as bears should, and I felt cold and skinny and growly. Anyway, we were off ; and when the tram stopped we got out and hurried over the crisp powdery snow. And soon we were on the moors.

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

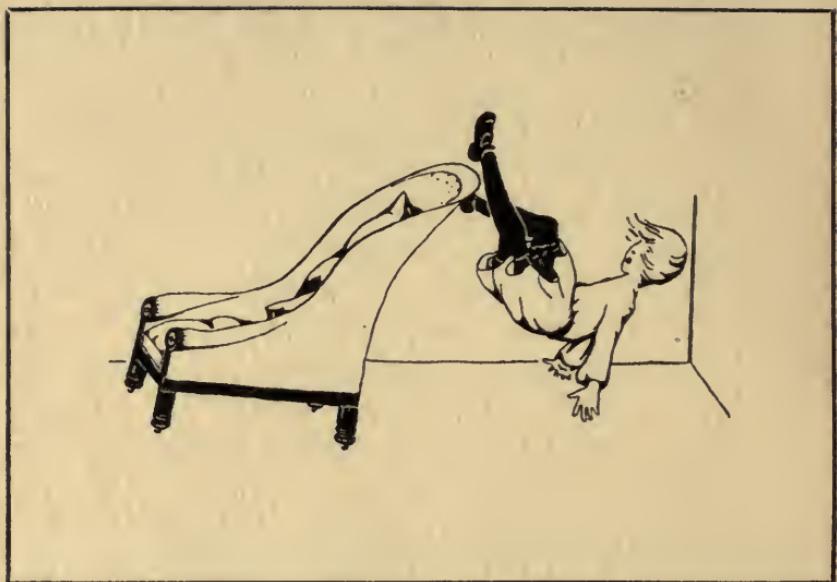
Oh ! The moors that afternoon ! I cannot tell you how the snow sparkled and how it lay like a pale mauve carpet on the hills ahead. And then I was glad I'd come, and owned up. The Big Bear said I owned up handsomely and would have been an ass to stay at home. We had great fun. Yorkshire moors, you may know, are wide and desolate and dark, but the snow made everything different. And we had a snow fight, and got wet and stinging, and were ever so happy.

Then in the middle of the moor we saw some wild-looking sheep. They started away when we came upon them, and I said, as any jolly bear would. "Let's catch one." That started us. Oh, my ! How we leapt over the hummocks ! How we crashed into thinly frozen pools ! How we jumped over the little rocky places ! And at last I stopped breathless, and the sheep I nearly caught dashed away. I looked round for the others. They had quite disappeared. Sheepcatching is a perilous adventure and very separating. So I sat down behind a big boulder (sandstone grit ; First Book of Geology !) and looked around the glittering lonely moor.

And then I saw, sitting on a tuft of blackened grass, five or six of the queerest goblins—tiny fellows with long spidery fingers and horrible little faces—and one in particular was looking very angrily at me. "Hullo !" I said ; "what's up ?" "You are," he said spitefully, "and I hoped you'd been down." "How ?" I asked. "With influenza and headache and pains and things," he snapped. "Why ?" I said. "Well, don't you see, you stupid ?" he said. (He didn't know who I was, I'm sure). "We go about giving doses of poison to *the people who don't want to do things*. And when they don't do them we

leap up and pour the poison in through their mouths or noses." "I've never seen you," I said. "No," they all grinned, "'course not; but you've sneezed at the poison a lot of times." "Oh!" I said. "Yes," they said. "We thought we'd get you this time," the particular goblin went on. "We caught you twice before and poisoned you when you wouldn't go out. Do you remember?" I nodded, and they all danced in horrid goblin glee. "But, of course, when you do the thing you don't want, it drives us away. It's a kind of rotten magic," said the goblins. "And where are you going now, you little wretches?" I said. "To Baildon Village yonder," they replied, "to a boy who won't wash his neck. He's getting so bad that he's just ready for us." "Oh! I hope," added one goblin, anxiously, "he won't go and wash before we come." "And I've got an eye-poison for a girl who reads by the fire-light," said another. "And I've got a new kind of illness for a father with a marvellously bad temper," said a third. "And I've got a poison which will make a grouser sit up," said a fourth. "Ugh! You hateful little things. Get away," I said. "You shall never catch me again." "Shan't we?" they laughed. "Oh, shan't we? You'll see."

Just at that moment there was a shout, and the Big Bear came up, with a strand of dirty wool in his hand. "Nearly; not quite!" he gasped. And the Happy Bear, as usual, had fallen into a hidden pool and now arrived squealing, and squelching water out of her shoes. "Look out!" I said, sharply. "What for?" she asked. "Goblins, of course," I said, solemnly.



## The KITCHEN BELLS

HAD a most terrific adventure the other night. But before I tell you about it I must tell you about Ella and Grandma Craddock. If I don't tell you about Ella and Grandma Craddock, you won't understand the secret part of my adventure, and the hidden secret in these stories of mine is always most important.

Ella and Grandma sat in the parlour. Outside the rain pattered and splashed. Ella was sorry she had eaten all her Saturday sweets. She watched Grandma Craddock knitting brown socks. In the corner of the parlour was a big arm-chair. Ella grew tired of watching Grandma. She thought: "Grandmamas only can knit and nod; they forget what it is like to play and shout." Ella climbed on to the big chair. She climbed up its tall back, and very carefully balanced herself on the top. Grandma looked up. "You'll fall, Ella," she said. "You'll fall down and be hurt dreadfully." Ella laughed: "You're a dear old Grandma," she said; "but you don't know everything." And Ella still balanced herself very cleverly on the chair back. Quite suddenly the chair slipped forward, and Ella fell back. She screamed, and all you could see were her little kicking heels. She had fallen behind the big chair. Grandma Craddock jumped up. She pulled the chair out, picked up Ella, and took her on her knee. She saw a big lump on Ella's forehead. Then she got her round tin of

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

vaseline to make the bump ache less. She also found three white lollipops in her pocket. Ella sobbed and sobbed ; but soon she grew quiet, and Grandma Craddock patted her hand. Ella said : " You're a dear old Grandma, and you know everything." Grandma Craddock smiled and kept on patting Ella's little hand. " Not everything," she said. " I cannot run and shout. Grandma is so old that she can sit still by the door and say, ' This way out ! Take care, or you will fall.' " Ella said : " I shall always love oldness the best." But after a while Ella forgot, just like you forget, and I forgot until the night of my adventure.

This is the story of my adventure. In our kitchen, hanging high on the wall, there are five very old bells. Ours is a very old house, and the bells used to ring proudly many years ago, when ladies in funny bonnets and gentlemen in coats with long tails pulled the knobs at the front door. Nowadays ladies and gentlemen do not pull ; they press the little button thing, which means that the house has new electric bells, and the old pull bells are no longer needed. So they hang in a long, quiet row, and we say : " Those silly old bells ! They are no use to anybody." Only sometimes, when very little children come, we lend them a walking-stick and stand them on a chair, and they make the poor old bells ring again. But mostly they hang silent and unnoticed by the kitchen door. When anybody calls, or when the salt has been forgotten, the bright electric bells ring impudently at the old quiet grey bells.

Now I must tell you something about myself. Sometimes I am so busy that I cannot go to bed when you do, or even when your mothers and fathers do. I stay up writing and doing things in my yellow study, and nobody seems awake in the city except the cats and me. When I do

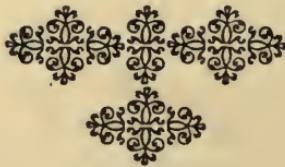
creep up to bed the house is dark and cold, and to keep me company I have to go into the kitchen, put the kettle on the gas-stove, and take out of the cupboard Willie Edward. Willie Edward is a fat, ugly stone jar. He holds hot water and makes your feet comfortable in bed, even on the coldest night. He is a magic fellow is Willie Edward, and he wears a jacket of pale blue flannel with a large V.T.P. embroidered on it.

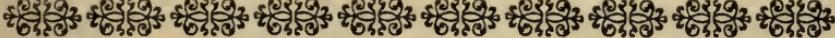
Well, on a Saturday night I tiptoed out for Willie Edward. It was pitch dark in the kitchen, for the shutters were over the window. I took some matches from my pocket, lit the gas and the stove, and made the kettle boil. Then very carefully I filled Willie Edward, screwed him up, put on his jacket, and took him up in my arms. I turned out the gas, and very slowly moved across the kitchen, and felt with one hand for the door. Bump I went against something. I felt again. Bump against something else. A moment ago the kitchen had seemed big and empty ; now it seemed chock-full of things which hit me. I banged into the wall ; I fell over a chair ; but I could not find the door. I felt all over the table for the box of matches, but only put my fingers in something cold and horrid. Not a match anywhere ; only black darkness ! It was quite awful. I went round and round the walls, but never came to any door. I only knocked over some big tin thing, which clattered horribly on the floor. I thought : "I've been here hours. I cannot find the door. There isn't any door. I'm pixie-led. I shall yell." (Pixies, you know, are tiny mischief imps, and they lead you round and round a field or a room in the dark, and you can't get out unless you know a spell which makes them stop it). I put Willie Edward on the floor. I felt round the walls once more.

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

There was no door, except cupboard doors. All at once I got hold of something. It felt like a long broom. I thought : " I shall look silly, but I'll bang the ceiling till somebody comes with matches." So I poked with the broom. Oh, what a row ! I'd hit the bells—those old grey bells. They rattled and rang together, and then I knew that I must be quite near the door, and quite suddenly I found it. I heard quick footsteps on the upstairs landing, and a voice crying : " Whatever are you playing at, making such a noise at this time of night ? " I said : " Playing ! I've been pixie-led. I should have been wandering the kitchen all night if those bells hadn't shown me the door." Then I got some matches, rescued Willie Edward, and went to bed. But before I left the kitchen I looked up at the still trembling grey bells and I said : " You helped me. You were at the door to say ' This way out. Be careful. Don't fall.' "

You'll never catch me saying : " Silly old bells" again.





## *The OTHER SIDE of THINGS*

*Spoken to the children at the Civic service, attended by the  
LORD MAYOR and CORPORATION OF BRADFORD*

EVERY Thursday he comes to our house, walks round the weedy, winding garden, through the old yard gates and past the kitchen window. He wears a very, very old battered hat, and he is always most helpful about things I don't know what to do with—things like a retired top-hat or buttoned boots with patent toe-caps. He always says: "My missus 'll fix 'em up." He has come to us for years. We think a lot of him. I don't know what we should do without him. He is also a friend of the family. He is our dustman.....and I am sure if I had what is called in thrilling books, a "horrid past," my Dustman would take it away in an old sardine tin and get rid of it for me.....Anyway, last week our dustbin was dreadfully full. When I went out with the dog, I saw it—bulging with powdery cinders, jaggy-edged pineapple tins, a fragment of aged matting, and a sauce bottle, like a church spire, towering over the rest.

So I went out to offer to help. My Dustman laughed. He heaved the bin up on his shoulder. " "It's nowt," he said, " to what I do 'ave; besides, a postcard to t' Town 'All if I'm a day late." And off he staggered, leaving

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

me thinking what a hateful job it was, clearing away all folk's unwanted things, all the rubbish of people..... And then crash ! .... I staggered in my turn..... The lid of the bin, nicely tilted on a stone shelf above, had rolled off against my head, and then fell clanging to the ground..... I went indoors ; and some people might say, as your fond parents have, no doubt, said to you : " That'll teach you not to interfere in what isn't your business."

I sat down in the yellow chair in my study..... I felt queer. It was a nasty whack on the head. I put my hand up to feel. Very gently I put my hand up ; and I felt it being taken and myself being pulled, pulled and pulled away. Then I saw I was no longer in my house, but somewhere else.....a city.....in front of me a long, dreary road. I walked along until I came to a sort of park, like a queer jumble of all the parks I'd ever seen ; and in the park, children.....but not playing. They had not happy eyes, as all children should have. They seemed to be waiting for something to happen, but I did not think they knew what they wanted to happen.....They came up to me, and I saw that some—though not all—had torn and dirty clothing ; that some were ill and some just unhappy. They said : " Have you seen him ? " I said : " Seen whom ? Where is this place ? " They said : " This is the Other Side of Things." I said : " Oh," just as you do when you are pretending to know and really don't. They said : " We are waiting for the Prince. We're all the unwanted, poor, and tiresome children. Nobody looks after us, or shows us how to do things, or understands about us." I was just going to say that I understood, when a sudden little gleam of sun came out from the smoky sky and showed me a

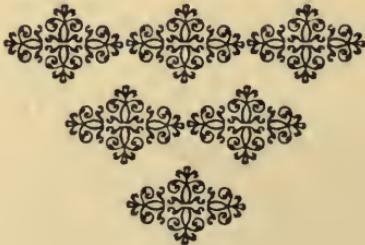
building close by, an ugly building. And on the sunny side of the wall a great many old, old people with bent heads, and I knew they were waiting, too. "Who are they?" I asked. "They," said the children, "are the very old poor. They are not wanted, either." And some of the children ran and laid their heads on the laps of the old, who touched them with frail, trembling hands..... At that moment I became frightened, for I saw in the distance others coming, coming from everywhere: sailors and soldiers broken in the wars, limping, groping.....and all the fathers who were looking for work. I heard the tramp of the feet of the Unwanted.....and I was afraid, and I turned and ran. As I ran, I heard cries, faint and then fainter..... Then suddenly I stopped. I had run straight into somebody's arms. Somebody held me tight and strong. I hid my face in fear again. A voice said: "What is it?" "The Unwanted," I gasped. "They are coming." "Then stay with me and meet them," said the voice. I felt ashamed, but not afraid any more. I tried to remember where I had heard that voice before..... And so, in the shelter of that arm, I turned.

And, as we came back to the city of the Unwanted, there was a great shout of welcome that rose and trembled up to the smoke-stained sky. Then I knew I was returning in the shadow of the arm of the Prince. I saw the children gathered close and taught how to be wanted. I heard the Prince talk to the old and tell them not to be angry and bitter, but believe in the new city the children would build, where there would be no unwanted. I saw him holding up a great flag of hope to the soldiers and sailors, and to the fathers. And I saw them start to build the city out of the old unwanted things. I saw a new city springing up,

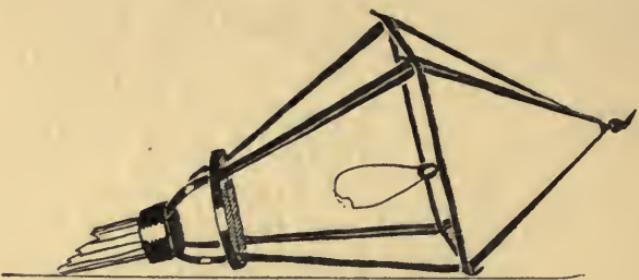
## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

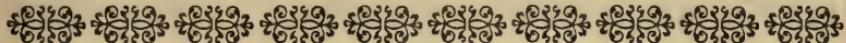
peaceful homes and blossoming gardens.....beauty for ashes.....and I knew it was the Bradford you and I have seen in our most splendid dreams.

Soon everything grew misty, and I knew I had to go. I cried to the Prince : " Oh, let me see your face before I go." He leaned over me, and I saw the loveliest face, quite strange, yet known..... It was the face of our Dustman. " How did you get here ? " I whispered. " How did you grow to care ? How did you learn to do all this for the Unwanted ? " He smiled, and I saw his eyes stray back to the city of things as we see them, beyond the darkening mist. " I had good practice with the unwanted things over yonder," he answered ; and he pushed me gently back.....into my yellow chair, into Bradford as it is.



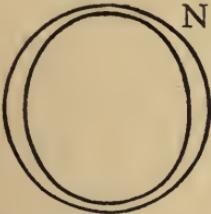






## *The OLD LAMP*



N Wednesday night one week a great storm raged round the house. The trees bent and creaked, and the wind howled and shrieked. Little gleams of moonlight burst out now and then and fell across the floor.

I lay awake and listened to the sounds. Suddenly something cracked loudly. I felt startled, and then remembered that our chest of drawers is the home of live goblins, who crack their joints for fun in the dead of night. Then I thought I heard our ghost stealing coldly across the landing outside. It was just as I felt I should have to switch on the light and read "Dope," a bedside meditation which I keep for nights when things won't let you sleep—it was just then I heard a frightful bump, and again bump. It seemed below. Not quite like burglars, but more like a giant's head would sound if cut off by some brave Jack. I began to freeze with horror; but I heard nothing more except the dismal howling and screaming of the wind. Then I fell asleep.

The next day I remembered what had happened in the night; but it wasn't until later that I discovered out in the front garden by the fence the old Lamp. Just over the wooden fence has stood a lonely lamp post. Each night the Lamp has made a broad splash of light in the back street and in our garden. It must be many years old

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

and must have seen all sorts of things. I went and looked at it. "So it was you," I said, "who bumped down on Wednesday night. What a fright you gave me! I suppose you were getting old and weak, and the wild wind threw you over." "Yes," said the Lamp, a little sharply. "Go on! Blame me! I woke you up, of course. I was a nuisance. Go on!" "Oh! I'm sorry," I said. "Did I seem rude? It must be rotten for you lying here after all you've done for us." "Not at all," said the Lamp, suddenly cheerful. "It's been almost worth my awful bump, which did upset me, to hear the opinions of the people in the back street about me. I've stood here guarding the backs of the houses for twenty years, and I've never heard a kind word. Indeed, two lovers once put out their tongues at me; but that was because I helped their parents to discover why they were so long getting an evening paper. I did it for the best." "Yes," I said, soothingly, "I'm sure you did. But we've often felt grateful. We didn't know you cared to hear us say so." "Oh! that's because you're Yorkshire," said the Lamp; "I come from Birmingham myself; and I don't believe in waiting till people have their necks broken before you tell them what a comfort they've been to you." "Well, we should have complained if anything had been wrong," I said, "and we never did complain." "There you go again," snapped the Lamp. "That's Yorkshire all over. Can't you tell a fellow when you like him as well as when you don't?" "I'm not Yorkshire, anyhow," I said shortly.

"To continue," said the old Lamp, as if I hadn't interrupted, "I have been gratified by the kind things said since my downfall. The old gentleman at No. 9 missed me at once. 'My old friend has gone,' he said. 'Now, I

wonder why? Corporation saving again, I suppose; and the Rates as they are'; and he got quite peppery. 'If there was a thing in this town I *did* value, it was that lamp.' I felt it was worth dying for that. And then the little boy across the way, who is so poorly—I heard him cry: 'Oh! my dear lamp is gone'; and he sobbed and wouldn't be comforted. It is pleasant to be loved so. Then quite half-a-dozen people banged themselves badly during the evening coming up your garden. 'Just like the Pomeroy's,' they said, 'to live in this forsaken spot.' " "Well," I said, "I do hope you'll be mended and set up again to cheer and guide us. My wife often speaks most highly of you." "Oh! is that who she is?" said the Lamp quite eagerly. "Now, her remarks to me have been most appreciative, and, I may say, personal and confidential. I should not care to repeat what she has said to me. I am glad to know who she is. I rather gathered from her remarks that she was an orphan and you were her great uncle." "Are you being funny?" I said coldly. "Not at all," said the Lamp. "But I do find it delightful to be able to tell you—as I believe you are a parson—that there are things to make up for being laid aside. Laid aside—a good old phrase, sir. I can truthfully say I regret nothing. It's true I bumped badly. It is true I shall have to be doctored. It is true I am rudely passed by cats as I lie here. But we can always lie and learn. And there's one thing about being ill or dead—you do get to know if you're missed."

"But what a pity to have to wait till then," I said, after a pause. "Say that to a Yorkshireman," said the Lamp, haughtily. "I myself come from Birmingham."



## BOBBIE

HIS is a perfectly true story about somebody who belongs to my church (Not that the other stories are not perfectly true; but this *is*). He doesn't generally come to hear me preach; but he calls at our house and eats raspberry sandwich. His name is Bobbie. He is the brightest, cleverest, knowingest, brown-eyed, white and black fox-terrier. He cannot come to our house quite so much now, because of Andrew, our black retriever, who has lately come to live with us. Andrew has already grown big, and he might feel upset by quick little Bobbie; especially if Bobbie had the raspberry sandwich. Andrew frightens the ladies who come to afternoon tea, and he makes them give him cake. "Good dog," they say, looking at his sharp white teeth. "Oh, my gracious! He's eaten the entire cake. I meant to give him only a crumb." I could tell some wonderful stories about Andrew; but this is Bobbie's story.

Bobbie lives near us in Selborne Grove. He loves his dear people very much. A little time ago the dear people went for a fortnight's holiday to Harrogate. Bobbie hated to see them packing. He knew they were going away. He sniffed at the bags. He made little whinnying noises in his sleep, and now and then he woke with a start, as you do when anything horrid is going to happen or has

## *The Legends of Lamb Lane*

happened. At last the time came to leave Bobbie, and he was shut in the dining-room. With his little paw he tapped the cruel glass of the window, and, oh, his brown eyes ! . . . . . With a snort, away went the taxi.

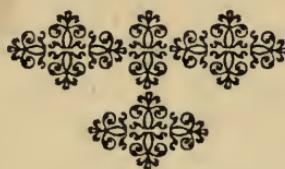
It was very nice at Harrogate ; so Bobbie's master and mistress decided to stay longer than a fortnight. But not without Bobbie. Exactly at the end of a fortnight Bobbie, who had been moping in the house, gave a short, glad bark and rushed to the door. The master had come. He took Bobbie with him to the Midland Railway station, and bought tickets for Harrogate. There was one ticket for the master and one for Bobbie.

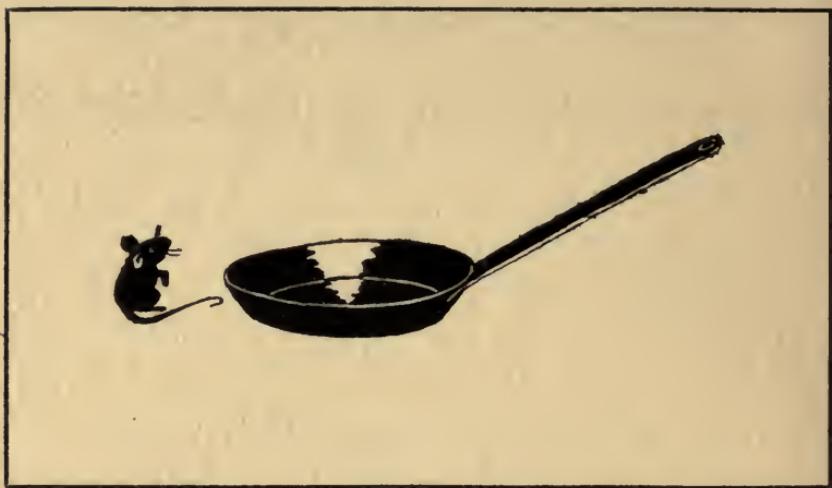
Bobbie liked Harrogate. He dashed about in the clean, wide streets and on the green, grassy spaces. He enjoyed watching the lords and ladies, who have eaten too much, trying to drink it off with the magic water which you can buy at Harrogate. He fell in love with the dog of a duchess. But the duchess did not agree to it. She said to her dog : " You can never marry a dog from an industrial town " —which was her polite way of calling our city a dirty hole. So Bobbie said to the dog of the duchess : " "Tis better so ! " and they parted, never to meet again. Then the Dear People and Bobbie came home again to Selborne Grove, and everything settled down.

Some months passed by, and the Dear People went again to Harrogate. But they did not take Bobbie. Bobbie wandered about miserably, and waited. At the end of a fortnight nobody came for Bobbie. So Bobbie suddenly made up his mind. The very next morning he walked out of the house, down the road, and away and away. At the Midland Railway Station Bobbie arrived, dodged the ticket man, and jumped into a train, marked " Birmingham and

Bristol." A porter found him and turned him out. Bobbie went to another train marked "Sheffield, Leicester and London." Again a porter found him and turned him out. Bobbie tried another train, and another. You see, he wanted to go to Harrogate, as he had gone before. But each time he was turned out by porters who did not understand. At last the Midland Railway Company was quite upset by Bobbie, and he was caught and locked in the stationmaster's office.

That night the Dear People came home. No Bobbie to welcome them ! It was sad, sad. But on Bobbie's collar there was his name and address. In the Selborne Grove house the telephone bell rang. The master went to it. "Yes," he said through the telephone. "Yes. Oh, is he there? Thanks. Thanks. We lost him. We'll come at once." Down to the Midland Station the Dear People rushed. They found Bobbie waiting. They heard all the story. "Oh, Bobbie ! Bobbie !" they said. "How could you ? Fancy you remembering ! You dear, clever, wonderful dog !" Bobbie's tail was wagging so fast you could scarcely see it, and his brown eyes were moist and sparkling. He looked up at his Dear People, and he said as plainly as anything : "*Love never forgets.*"





## ANANIAS

NEVER knew how easy it was to be untidy and neglectful till I was left to manage the house and look after myself. I succeeded in doing a lot of damage ; encouraged Elfrida, the kitchen mouse, to have a large family ; choked the kitchen grate ; and somehow or other—goodness knows how!—a dead bird was found in the waste-paper cupboard in the scullery. I admit that I made a mess of things and was jolly glad when the train tipped out two sun-browned persons from Cornwall to clean me up. That was why I sat by the kitchen fire one chilly Saturday night and looked round upon the clean sparkliness. Three mouse-traps lay in simple faith side by side on the floor. (Oh, Elfrida ! I ought never to have encouraged you). On the bright gas-stove sat Emma, Fred and Molly, the kettles ; a new little speckled saucepan from Cornwall ; and, freshly shining beside the speckled saucepan, lay Ananias, the aluminium frying-pan.

I cannot tell you how good to look at Ananias is, nor what awful trouble I've had with him. Naturally, while deserted by both wife and housekeeper, I've *fried* a good deal. Frying is quick. Frying, I told myself, is what is called “casual and unskilled labour.” I know now that I was wrong. Frying is a very ticklish job. And Ananias *stuck*. No matter how much dripping or butter or fat of

## *The Legends of Lamb Lane*

any kind I put into him, Ananias stuck. So the eggs became omelettes ; the potatoes became soufflé, as they say in restaurants ; the tomatoes became a seedy mash ; and I began to hate Ananias. He came from the South of England, too, did Ananias.

So, as I sat by the kitchen fire last week, because it was the only fire in the house, I wasn't altogether surprised when I heard Emma, the large kettle, say to the Speckled Saucepan : " So you've come to live here. We don't care about strangers here." " No ? " said the Speckled Saucepan, gently. " I'm sorry. I feel rather lonely, you know. I've had such a happy time where I came from. They used to take me in a basket down a sweet lane to the sea, and my mistress would light a fire on the rocky shore and boil eggs in me. She said she didn't know what they would have done without me. I was very happy—there by the sea." " Don't rely on the word of the mistress," put in Molly. " She says one thing to-day and another to-morrow. She's mad on green to-day, and to-morrow she'll be painting Emma here scarlet." " She won't ! " said Emma, firmly. " What about the sideboard ? She painted that crimson," cried Molly. " Well, well," growled Fred. " Who knows what she'll do ? There's no depending on anybody but a good Yorkshireman."

There was silence, and then I heard a slight sob. " Oh ! Who's that ? " said the Speckled Saucepan. " It's me," gasped Ananias. " Fred's having a hit at me. I come from a long way off and I'm no good. I stick. I don't know how it is. I try not to. All the others hate me. They won't forgive me. Every morning I think that I will now forget my bad record and start all fresh, and give up the eggs unbroken and the potatoes nice and brown ; but I get so

nervous with the others watching me that I get hotter and hotter, and before I know anything I hear the Boss say : ' Oh, dash it ! This beastly thing has stuck again.' " " I should keep on trying," said the Speckled Saucepan. " You *can't*," sobbed *Ananias*, " when everybody's remembering what you've done before and expecting you to do it again." " I shall believe in you," whispered the Speckled Saucepan—whispered so low I could scarcely hear. " That's all very well," Emma said. " Some people fight quick and forgive quick. We aren't made that way. *Ananias* is a fraud. He doesn't do his job properly. We don't want him, and we aren't going to forgive him till we see him shape." " Shape," murmured the Speckled Saucepan. " What's shape ? " " It's Yorkshire for stop sticking," snapped Molly.

Just then the stout boiling-pan on the shelf spoke. " I think the little speckled person's right," he said. " It's best to forgive quick, and if you make a mistake let it be on the generous side. I believe *Ananias* will be a new fellow to-morrow."

Click went a mouse-trap. I jumped and flew out of the kitchen. (Oh, poor bereaved family of Elfrida !).

The next morning I heard a voice say : " I can't think why you grumbled so at *Ananias*. Look ! The eggs are perfect." So they were—crispy and edged with light brown. I looked at the company on the gas-stove. All was silent. Only I thought—I almost thought I saw *Ananias* tremble slightly and lean a little to the left against the Speckled Saucepan.



## A KITCHEN ADVENTURE

THIS is a story with a hidden meaning. It was only the other day we found that Molly had taken us in ; that she was, in fact, a complete sell. Molly is a little kettle. Her colour is a beautiful moss-green. She has a handsome curved, proud nose, and was guaranteed to boil in eight minutes. Molly was received with great joy in our family ; and we pushed Emma—a faithful friend for many years—into the back, dark corner of the kitchen stove. Emma's colour is dull navy blue. She is a fat, solid respectable kettle. She takes an eternity to boil. Emma is a good Birmingham kettle. She does what she says she will and makes no fuss about it. But she's slow—always has been awfully slow. And when she *does* boil she gives only a faint hiss. We have been angry many times with Emma. On the days when we were in a rush, the commonest thing you could hear in our house was : " Oh ! do hurry up and boil, Emma," or " Look at that stupid old Emma, taking her time ! " Our Yorkshire maid used to say : " She's nothing to look at, isn't our Emma." So you see a little why we bought Molly and why we pushed Emma into the background. " Isn't Molly pretty ? " we would say. Many visitors came into the kitchen to meet Molly and greatly admired her moss-green colour.

The breakfast certainly hurried up the day after we had

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

Molly. She really does boil in eight minutes. But when we bought her I am afraid we didn't count on her temper. Now, a kettle is not supposed to have any temper ; but Molly has. Molly spits. I am sorry to have to say it ; but there you are—she *does*. Unless you snatch her off the gas-ring at the exact second at the end of eight minutes, she sends the water all over the floor and round about, and the mats get sopping wet, and everybody is very cross, and breakfast is no better than when we had to wait for Emma.

And it was on Wednesday night, very late, when I discovered the real truth about Molly. I was sitting by the nearly dead kitchen fire. There was only a little glimmer. I had been reading till it was too dark to see ; and then I just sat still to think of a story to tell to children. And quite suddenly I heard a high, vain voice say : "I wish you wouldn't jostle me, Emma. You're so horrid and dark. I love to be gay. You sit there on the back of the stove and look so glum. Why don't you sing as I do ?" It was Molly, the green kettle, speaking. "Sing !" growled the porridge saucepan, "you don't sing, you spit." "Shut up, you silly thing !" shrieked Molly, "you can't get on at all unless you're doubled. You burn if you're left alone." "I've something to be sad about," said Emma quietly. "I did my best for this family. It's true I wear my navy blue, which is burned black and shabby ; but the missus of the house seems to fancy bright colours, and so I'm put back here." "I have an idea," said the frying-pan, lying shiny and flat by her side, "I have an idea that the new missus, the one they call Miss Emily, who is a real housekeeper, will be taking you back into favour, Emma. I heard her say yesterday she thought old and tried friends

are the safest, even though they aren't much to look at." Emma sighed. "Quite naturally," began Molly again, "I spit when I boil. I haven't been used to a black stove. I lived in a shop with others of my high social standing. We saw a very great deal, I can tell you. I was nearly bought by two lovers, who fancied me very much." "You'd have been the cause of their first quarrel if they *had* bought you," growled the porridge saucepan. "Well, you aren't any class, anyway," snapped Molly. "Swank-pot!" answered the porridge pan. Just then the hot water in the boiler bubbled out: "Stop quarrelling, you pots. They that live longest see most. This is a democratic house. I shouldn't be at all surprised if they feel ashamed pretty soon of casting off Emma just because she's slow and sure and plain"—hubble, bubble; hubble, bubble; plop! went the water in the boiler, and I started. The fire was almost out, although the water was still hot. I shook myself. The pots and pans were very quiet. Nothing stirred. Elfrida, the kitchen mouse, scampered across the floor; and I went upstairs.

The next morning I heard a voice in the kitchen say: "You wretched little Molly. I wish we'd never bought you. Get back into the dark corner. I hate you, for all your bright green, boiling all over the floor. Come, let's fill Emma. It's a mistake to go by looks. Emma's always the same. Come on, Emma, ever faithful—" And I heard the plop of the gas and the soft bang of Emma restored to her rightful place on the foremost biggest ring of the gas-stove. I felt glad—for Emma's sake, and for our sakes, too.



## JOEY

THIS is a story about Joey. You may know him. You may not. I don't really know that he is called Joey ; but we always call him so. I adore Joey. Mostly he is seen at the Park Gates, where the tramways meet. He carries three small iron rods with twisted ends. Joey is a very little man. He wears the uniform of the Bradford Corporation. He clears out the points on the tram lines. He is always as neat as a little black pin. That is Joey.

Well, then, to begin. Just before Easter, on a bitterly cold, sleety day, I went to the corner of St. Mary's Road to catch a tram. It was the kind of day when nobody wants to walk. The trams were full. I leapt on. A steamy air oozed out from inside the car. I put my foot on the first stair. The conductor laid a firm hand on me. "Full upstairs," he said. "Room for one only inside." I crushed myself half inside and half on the platform. In doing so I stepped upon the foot of a lady. The foot was inside a grey suede shoe. I apologised. The lady didn't even look at me. She was cold and haughty. She looked as if she was thinking : "Hateful creature ! They ought to keep these clumsy men off the cars !" I gave my tuppence to the conductor. My hands were cold. So were his. We dropped a penny, and it rolled between those awful ridges of the tram-car floor. We groped and bumped. The conductor

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

said : " There it is ! Come on—get it ! It won't grow into tuppence if you leave it in the wet."

I looked down the car. Everybody seemed cross and cold. The ladies who live up our way don't like crowded cars. They don't say : " Push up, love, and let yon lad sit down." " Beastly day," I said to the conductor. " Rotten job this," said the conductor crossly. " Wish I had yours —one day a week in church !" " Don't talk rubbish !" I said sourly. " I work a jolly sight harder than you, and never catch up with it." " So tha' says," replied the conductor ; " but I'm fair stalled." (" Stalled " in Yorkshire means " fed up "). " So am I !" I snapped. I looked again down the car. I looked at all the cold, cross faces. I felt everybody was " stalled."

Just then we turned round the bend by the Park Gates. Who should jump on but—Joey. " Full up !" said the conductor ; but he smiled a teeny, wry smile. " I'm only a small 'un !" said Joey, very cheerfully. " Cold job yours," I said. " There's colder," said Joey.

" You've been ill, 'aven't you ?" said the conductor. " Ay ; but I'm not dead yet !" said Joey. " Funerals is too dear. I mun wait till it's cheaper," and he grinned like a cheerful gnome. " Tha' looks sober, lad," he said to the conductor. " I feels it," said the conductor. " Cars choked up and folks talkin' as if they owned car and you too." " Ay," said Joey. " Points is choked too. But tha's like me. Tha' canst shove all out ivery now and then." " Ay," said the conductor, and he laughed suddenly.

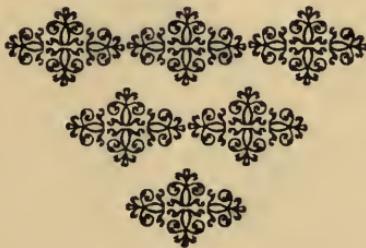
" Tha' looks cold, lad," said Joey to me. " I feel rather cold," I answered. " Cheer oop !" said Joey. " Summer's comin', and tha'll be hot enough then." He chuckled and

jumped off the car. I watched his little figure, dim through the rain, bending over the tram lines.

"He's cheerful," I said to the conductor. "Never see 'im no other," said the conductor.

I got off the car. A little streak of sunlight struggled out. I felt better. "Joey's cleared my points a bit," I said to myself. I felt surprisingly warmer.

And, although I may travel all over the world, I shall never quite forget Joey—Joey, who doesn't drive tram-cars or conduct them, but *clears the points*.





# The FACE at the WINDOW

THIS is a very personal story, and I know it is rather tiresome to tell stories about oneself. But it isn't only about me; in fact, I may as well say that I didn't show up as well as usual. You know I tell you everything; and, as you will see from the title, this personal story is quite thrilling—at least, we thought there was going to be a thrill, although not of the kind it turned out to be. I'm getting a little mixed up, so I'll go back to the beginning, which was on Whit-Monday.

I daresay you did jolly things on Whit-Monday. We made up our minds to spend nearly all day in the garden. Ours is a mysterious garden, tucked away among the houses and surrounded by trees. You cannot see much of it from the road, or from anywhere else in summer-time. It is quite exciting and surprising to find a little park, and the queer old house, with creeper all over the front, and low windows, and a dark, cool dampness about it which makes people say it is ghostly and too shut in to be quite good for chests and rheumatism. This is our house and garden in the midst of a city. So, of course, we were very pleased that by Whit-Monday the trees were full and spreading, and made a green curtain behind which we could hide as we lay on the daisied grass. Away in the street we heard the tramp of people and the thudding of

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

the trams and the bugles and drums of Boy Scouts. But we were safe in the sunshine, with lilac smelling faint and sweet, and some real lilies of the valley in the shade by the well. So we settled down with books and a bottle of mixed fruit-drops. And it was then, while we were perfectly comfy, we saw IT—the face at the window.

There are many windows round the garden—the windows of other houses—but all are hidden by the trees, all but this one which we'd never noticed before. It was just like any other window. It had white curtains, but the curtains were not looped up each side with white tasselled curtain-holders after the style fashionable in our neighbourhood ; they hung straight down, and, from the narrow space between, there peered a face, a dim, pale, everlasting face. We shifted our garden chairs a little ; but the maddening thing was that we couldn't escape the face. There was a gap in the trees just there, and wherever we sat the eyes of that face followed us. We pretended not to see it, but at last we owned up—Happy and I—that it was a nuisance. At least, I said it was a nuisance. "It's going to spoil Whit-Monday—that peering face," I said. Happy said : "Perhaps it's a poor old lady with sciatica who can't move, and she likes to look out and pretend it's country." But I knew Happy didn't believe it. Then we gave up reading, and we stared. The face bobbed back, but it soon came out again. Oh ! how we disliked it—watching, watching. I said to myself : "Don't be silly. Why shouldn't it look ?" But there was something horribly upsetting about that face. The morning became quite miserable. I wondered how long it would take to grow an elder tree in the gap. Five years at least. Fancy being spied at for five years ! For one dreadful moment I thought

of putting my tongue out, and then I looked sharply at Happy to be sure she wasn't doing it. All through dinner (we had it in the garden) it watched. "Doesn't it eat?" I said. "Perhaps it hasn't anything to eat," said Happy.

After dinner I planted a sprig of elder. "It'll take five years at least," I said, angrily, to myself. Half of our Whit-Monday was gone, and all the sunny afternoon the face at the window kept watching. And when the sun was going down I couldn't bear it any longer. I lost my temper. "I'm going indoors," I said. "I hate being watched." "All right," said Happy; and we collected our books and the empty bottle of no fruit-drops, and we went down the grass to the door, and I went in. Just inside the hall I looked back suddenly. Happy was outside, and I turned just in time to see her with a terrific smile wave her hand wildly, and then—she blew a kiss towards the horrible window. "Whatever *are* you doing?" I said. Happy blushed. "Just thought I'd wave good-bye to It," she said, cheerfully. "You stupid!" I said in my very stern voice. "How can you do such awful things? Whoever the face belongs to will be cross. It's a kind of insult." "Couldn't help it," said Happy.

The next day was still holiday; but I didn't think I'd go into the garden. I sat in my yellow room till Happy came rushing in. "It's gone," she cried, "the face, and the window's open and the curtains are blowing jollily. The window's got a sort of nice grin. I don't believe it'll come again."

But it did. Only it seemed (it may have been only fancy) to nod and smile, and then it went away, and never did we see it again all that happy Whit-Tuesday. "How's the elder twig getting on?" asked Happy in the evening.

## *The Legends of Lamb Lane*

I went over to the gap and pulled up the drooping branch. "I don't see why I should wait five years, when a wave and a blown kiss will do the trick," I said. And I broke the twig into little pieces. "We'll have supper now," said Happy. And we had it—cold pigeon pie—in front of the staring window, which wasn't horrid any more.





## *The Little FORGOTTEN THINGS*

IN our house we have a queer place. It is a little room without a window, although the door is large and heavy. It is lighted by an aged electric globe. It has shelves all round. The gas-meter lives there. And, most curious and fascinating of all, there is a trap-door and a row of dark stone steps leading down to where there is, they say, a well which has no bottom. It is all very mysterious and delightful, I can tell you. But it is not of the bottomless well I want most to tell you, but of the little dim room itself. We call it "Europe." You know from your maps what Europe consists of, so I need not say more about that. But perhaps you do not know that nobody—not kings, queens, lords, ladies, horses and men—seems to be able to make Europe a nice place just now. It is all in a muddle and mess. And our little room is like that; so we call it "Europe." Miss Emily would be furious if she knew I have said that the little room is muddled; because when Miss Emily came to the house, things were put in nice, neat rows. But the old name sticks even to a tidy "Europe."

Now in our "Europe" there is a special shelf which has a row of specially queer things—a row of left things; a row of forgotten things. There lie all the things people have left at our house when they have come to stay with us. Some we have forgotten to send back. Some we didn't

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

discover till too long after. Anyway, there they are. There is a shaving brush, a dressing-gown cord (purple-silk), two pipes, a cigarette-holder, five aged gloves, none of which belongs to another, a bottle of boric acid, a mutilated razor strop, seven tooth-brushes, a little cracked mirror, a boot. . . . . Oh ! but I cannot go on.

I was looking at the shelf of left and forgotten things, and I was thinking how stupid it was of people to leave things behind, and how foolish of me not to send them on at once when people did leave them. And then I thought to myself : "Anyhow, it doesn't matter. All the big and important things I *do* send on—all the really important things like silk hats, bath-chairs and bicycles." And at that moment I spied a broken garden chair, and thought I'd see if I could do anything with it. I dragged it out of the corner, put it straight, and sat in it to see what was wrong. I seemed to have been in that chair not more than a moment, when it sank . . . . sank, with me in it. "Goodness !" I said to myself, "I shall go into the bottomless well. How everybody will miss me. How everybody will say that I was greatly loved, and never, never find me." . . . . Bump !

I opened my eyes. I found myself in a strange yet most beautiful place. I stood on a grassy bank, and looked across a river. On the other side of the river was all I had ever wanted in my life. I shall not tell you what was there. Only this will I tell you. There was the darlingest little house, with thatch for a roof, and a garden with all the trees and flowers I love best. And somewhere the sound of the sea. . . . . And as I stood there on one side of the river, and looked across to the land of my heart's desire, I saw many, many other people, people I knew, and they, like me, wished to cross. But there were no bridges, no

## *The Little Forgotten Things*

boats. So at last, all together we set to, and made a raft, and crossed ever so eagerly to the other side.

How gladly we leapt to the shore ! But then, Oh ! then, something we had not seen before arose. There, blocking the way to my desire, was a huge obstacle, a great barrier I could neither pass nor mount nor move. I saw that I must clear away this mountain of difficulty before I could get to my heart's desire. And what do you think the mountain was made of ? Why, thousands and thousands of shaving brushes, thousands and thousands of odd gloves, thousands of bottles, old pipes, thimbles and cracked mirrors. There was no escape. I could hear somewhere a voice calling : "Where are you ? Oh ! where are you ? Come soon ! " "I'm here ! " I yelled. "I'm behind the mountain of forgotten and left things." And there was no answer. I worked and worked to make a way. Tears of hotness ran off me. "I never knew the little things mattered so much," I gasped.

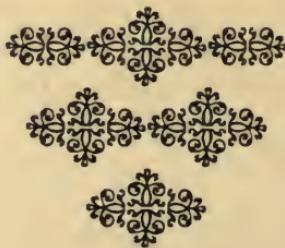
By the by I had got a great pile to one side. And an old boatman glided up the river. Into the boat I loaded my lost and left things, and down the river they went. And again and again and again. Then I ventured to speak to the silent boatman. "I always sent back the big things," I said sadly ; "all the important things—silk hats and bath-chairs, and....." "It's the little things which keep you from the land of heart's desire," said the boatman, in a stern, sweet voice. And I turned to my work again ; and, as I worked, I heard the voice calling—"Where are you ? Where are you ?" Closer came the voice. Then it said : "Whatever ! "

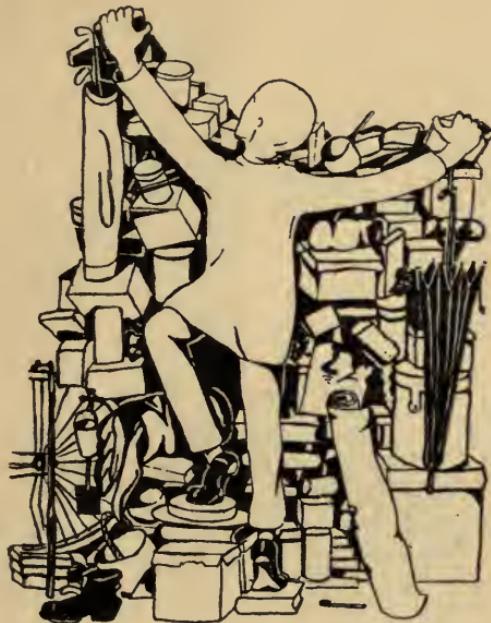
With a start I blinked my eyes. "Whatever are you doing ? Asleep in a broken chair in 'Europe.' Whatever

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

next?" cried the voice. "Am I really here?" I said. "Well, I'm jolly glad to be here, too. And I'd better start removing all the little things *here*, else I shall have a mountain when I'm *there*." "You've been dreaming," said the voice. So I told all about it.

"Now, I shouldn't be surprised," said Miss Emily. "if there isn't some meaning in that. I'll look in the Dream-Book. I'll look at M.—Mountains." "You needn't look there for the meaning," I said. And NEVER AGAIN .....But there! I need tell you no more.







## *The POLICEMAN*

**H**IS name is Andrew. He is six years old. More than anything in the world Andrew wants to be a policeman—a policeman exactly like the one who stands opposite the Midland Station. That policeman, I can tell you, knows everything. He is immensely wise. He wears large white cotton gloves on his hands, which he moves grandly this way or that. A tram, even the fullest tram, will stop if he holds up a hand. Anything will stop. Is it any wonder that Andrew will keep on saying : “Mother, may I be a policeman when I grow up ?” Mother smiles, and says : “Perhaps,” or “We’ll see what Daddy says.” And Andrew will say when Daddy comes home from business : “Daddy, may I be a policeman like the one by the Midland Station ?” Then Daddy says : “Well, you must regulate your own traffic first. Why, you’re always nearly being run over yourself.” Andrew feels this to be a little stupid of Daddy ; for traffic never knocks down a policeman. He holds his hand up, and—well, there you are !

One day last week Mother took Andrew and Baby to the shops. Baby was in the push-cart. The sun shone, and the trams rattled, and motors flashed past, and little dogs barked. It was all very exciting. The policeman at the Midland Station looked grander than ever. He even looked

## *The Legends of Lumb Lane*

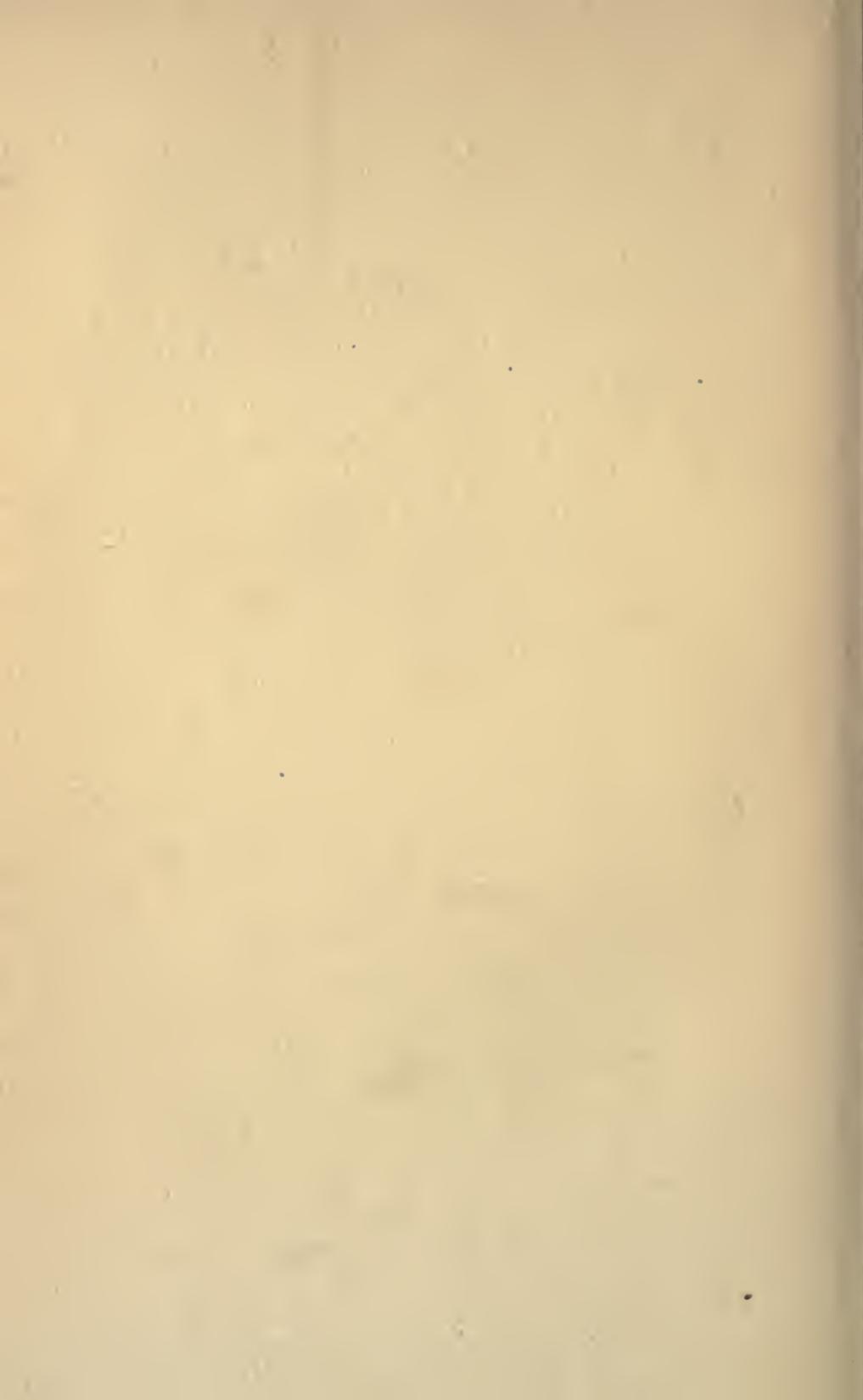
down and smiled at Andrew and at Baby in the push-cart. "Mother," said Andrew, "do say I may be a policeman." "Well," said Mother, "we must see how you begin at managing the vehicular traffic this afternoon." Andrew thought this funny of Mother, "What's *vicular*?" he said. "Vehicles," said Mother, "are carriages, carts, waggons, trams, motors, perambulators and push-carts. Traffic is all of them moving together." "Oh," said Andrew. He didn't see what that had to do with his being a policeman. "Now," said Mother, "I'm going into Brown & Muff's. Just you stay in this little covered place with Baby." "All right," said Andrew. So Mother left Baby and Andrew in the sheltered doorway, where there was a window filled with gentlemen's gloves and shoes and gorgeous dressing-gowns.

It seemed a long time to Andrew. Baby sat in the push-cart, playing with her Teddy-bear. Presently Andrew wondered whether the toys were still in the window just down and round the corner. He thought he'd have a look. So he left Baby in the push-cart. He went right round the front of Brown & Muff's big shop. No, it was too bad. They had taken away the toys. The window was full of ladies' silly hats and things. He came slowly back. Mother was coming out of the door. "Where's Baby?" she said. "Here," said Andrew. "Where?" said Mother, sharply. "She—she—I left her just here," stammered Andrew, stupidly. "Oh, Andrew!" cried Mother; and she rushed round the shop front. Lots of babies; lots of push-carts; but not *their* baby. Andrew began to cry. He'd lost Baby. Only in that little minute he'd lost Baby. Mother looked white. "We must go to the policeman," she said. Oh, poor Andrew. The policeman would know what he'd done.

And just at that moment they saw Daddy. He was crossing the road with Baby in the push-cart. "Oh!" cried Andrew, darting out. "Oh!" cried Mother after him. "Yes, I should think so," said Daddy. "I came up just in time to see young Andrew desert his sister. So I frightened him by taking Baby off. If I hadn't come up, heaven knows what might have happened!" Mother said: "My precious!" and nobody knew which of the two she meant—Baby or Daddy. Certainly it was not Andrew.

Andrew walked soberly by Daddy. "Come along, old chap," said Daddy, "you'll have to be a bit sharper in looking after the vehicular traffic. No decent policeman would let a *baby* be stolen right under his nose!"

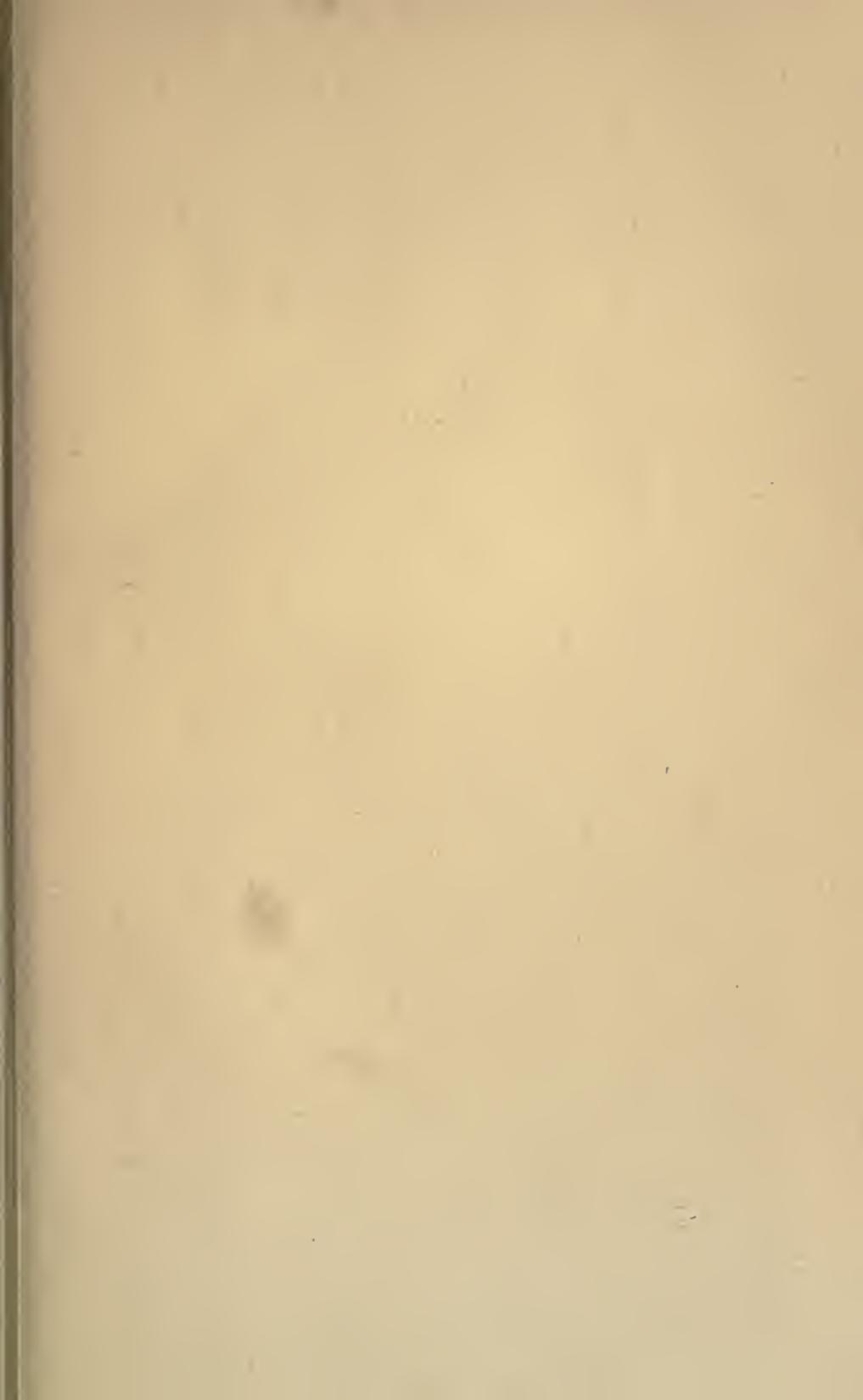
THE END OF THE LANE

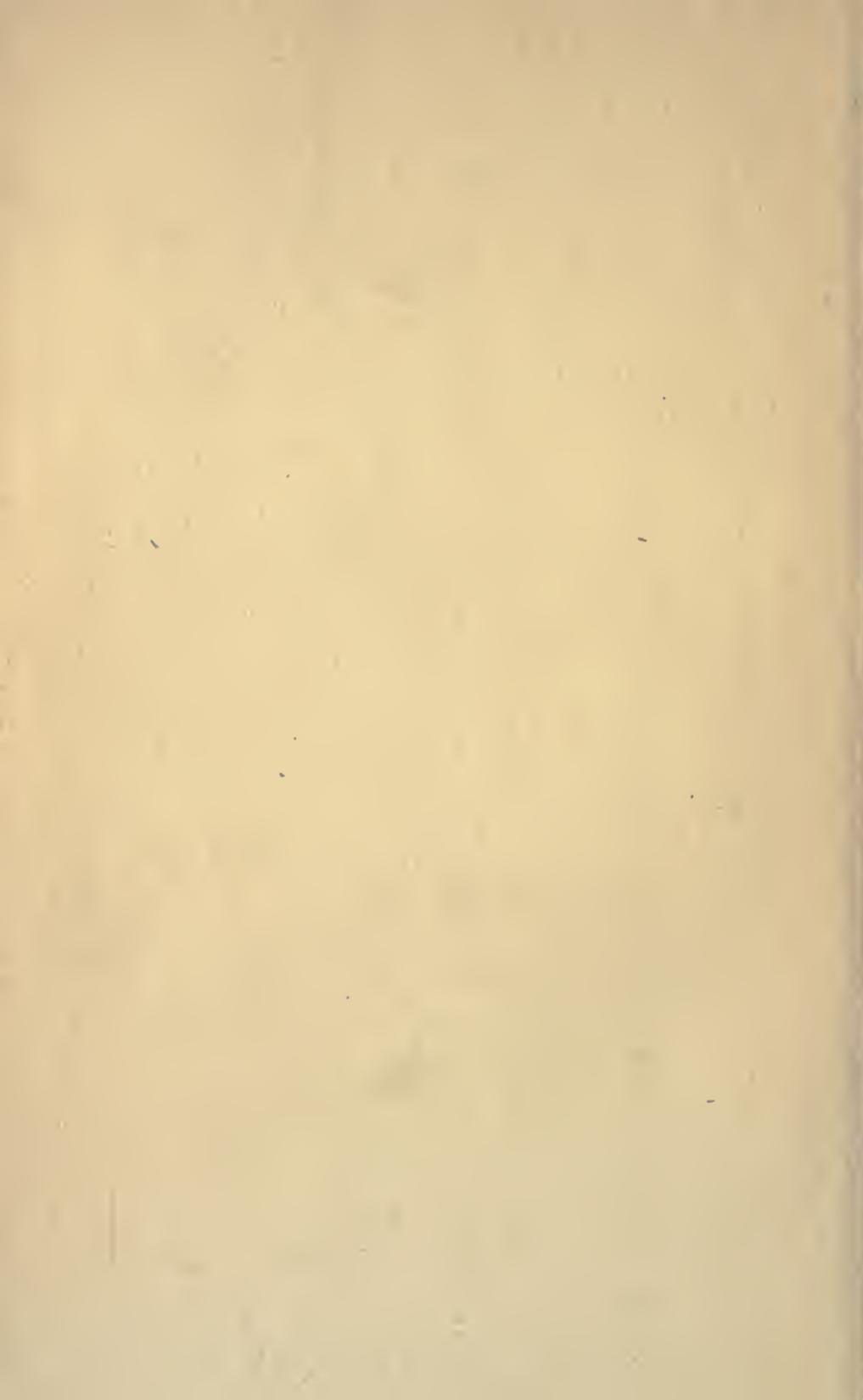


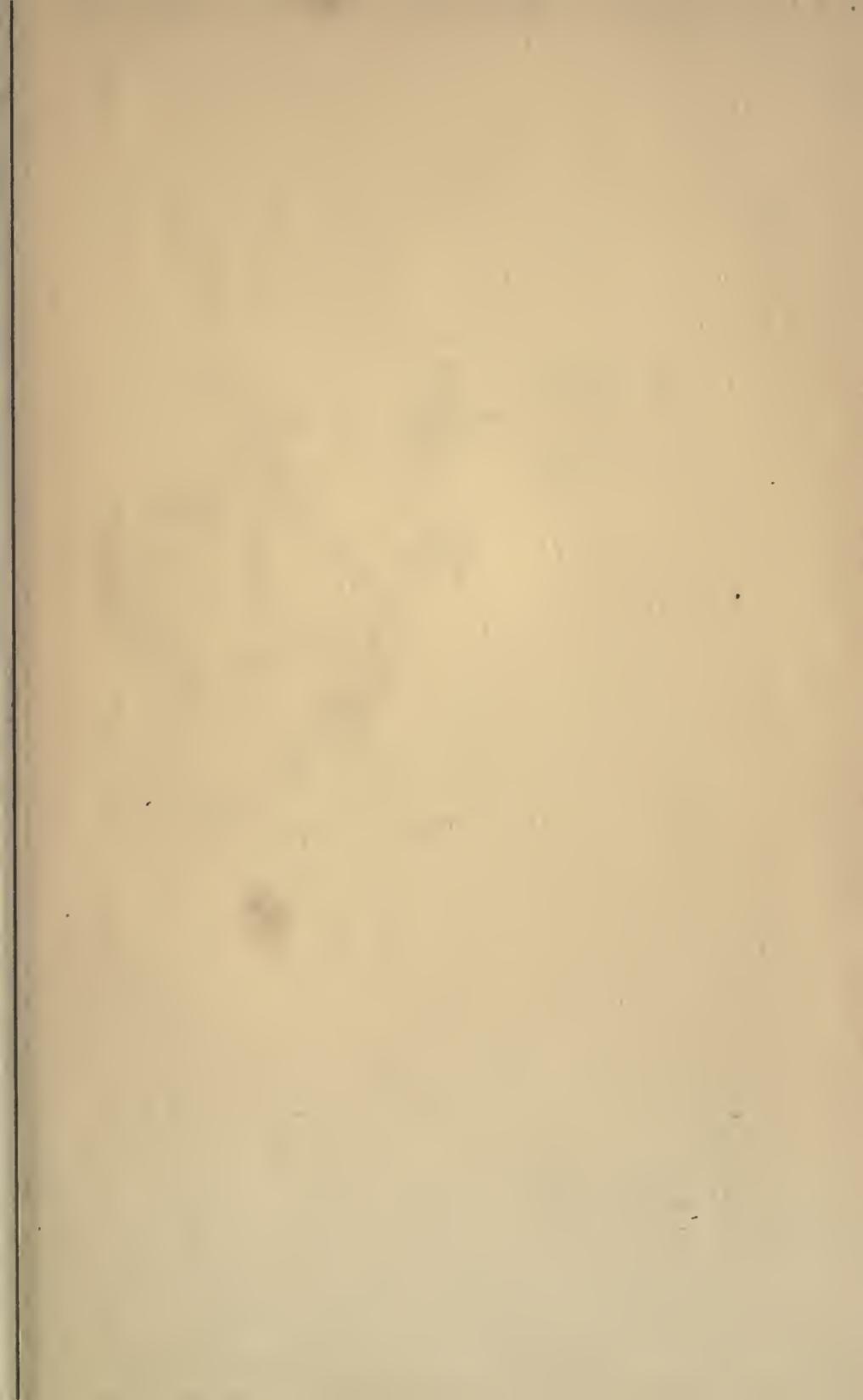
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